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Priscilla. M. Mallinson

London. Published by Henry Colburn. 1844.

MEMOIRS  
OF  
MADAME MALIBRAN,

BY  
THE COUNTESS DE MERLIN,  
AND OTHER INTIMATE FRIENDS.

WITH A  
SELECTION FROM HER CORRESPONDENCE,  
AND NOTICES OF THE  
PROGRESS OF THE MUSICAL DRAMA  
IN ENGLAND.

IN TWO VOLUMES.  
VOL. I.



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## P R E F A C E.

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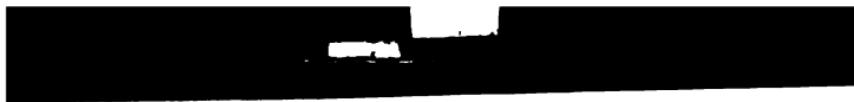
THE admiration created by the lamented subject of these Memoirs has been no less general than the interest excited by her untimely death. Her genius was of a most exalted character, comprehending a perception of whatever was purely intellectual in the resources of the art she had so thoroughly studied, with an intimate knowledge of the most prominent phenomena of human passion. But the characteristics of her moral nature were equally admirable with those proper to her mind. Her charity was unbounded; her sympathies so delicately sensitive, that the slightest appeal was sufficient to

bring them into most active and liberal operation ; and her disposition was of that rare description which regards such kindly doings as the manifestations of a genuine humanity.

She was eccentric, it is true, and occasionally indulged in extravagances not perfectly feminine, which were, however, injurious to no one but herself. These faults, if faults they must be called, were the natural results of an imperfect education. Her father had laboured only to make her a musician, and a musician she became. Great natural talent there is no doubt she possessed ; but to long and severe schooling much of its splendid results may fairly be attributed. The nobility of her character was of her own formation. She had no lessons in moral excellence, and her only examples of conduct were not such as could influence her with any beneficial effect.

The biography of a being so gloriously gifted cannot be read without profit ; and to make it as interesting as possible, it has been thought

advisable to publish in this work the observations of no less than three individuals—the most intimate of her associates—by whose united labours we are enabled to obtain the only perfect portraiture of her the public is likely to possess. There are few readers to whom the varied story of her life has not considerable attractions; but to the lover of music it must be particularly pleasing. To him, therefore, it is more particularly addressed; and with the hope that it may satisfactorily fulfil its objects, the Essays here introduced, in illustration of the progress of operatic music in this country, have been added.



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## INTRODUCTION.

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### PROGRESS OF THE ITALIAN OPERA IN ENGLAND PREVIOUS TO THE PERFORMANCES OF MALIBRAN.

AT the commencement of the eighteenth century, foreign fashions began to be so generally adopted in the higher circles of English society, as to call forth the animadversions of the editor of the *Spectator*. In an amusing article on this subject, Addison confines his remarks exclusively to the adoption of French customs by his countrywomen, one of whom he describes as receiving company in her bed-room; the last

Parisian novelty introduced by those ladies who professed to have seen the world. "As I love to see everything that is new," he observes, "I once prevailed upon my friend, Will Honeycomb, to carry me along with him to one of these travelled ladies, desiring him at the same time to present me as a foreigner who could not speak English, that so I might not be obliged to bear a part in the discourse. The lady, though willing to appear undressed, had put on her best looks, and painted herself for our reception. Her hair appeared in a very *nice* disorder, and the night-gown, which was thrown upon her shoulders, was ruffled *with great care.*"

Our admirable essayist has omitted in this paper all mention of the foreign amusements which the travelled ladies were at this period bent upon introducing into England. Their native theatrical entertainments, though supported by the talent of Betterton, and even the still more popular puppet-shows, were losing all

attraction in their eyes, in consequence of their desire to indulge themselves in London in performances similar to those they had enjoyed abroad. The first steps towards the consummation of this desire appeared in various concerts and interludes, wherein foreign singers were introduced to public notice under the designations of “an Italian lady;” *Signor Gasparini*, *Signora Francesca*, *Margarita de l'Epine*, with her sister “*Maria Margherita*.” The performances of these individuals formed the principal subject of conversation at *basset* and *crimp*, at the assembly, and the club; and their popularity led to the getting up of an opera “in the Italian manner” at one of the theatres. Thomas Clayton, a member of the royal band, produced at Drury Lane the first attempt of this kind, which was an English version of an opera performed at Venice, in the year 1677. He styled it “*Arsinoe, Queen of Cyprus*.” It was sung in recitative, as in the original, and exhibited to the public by private subscription,

as well as by money taken at the doors of the playhouse. It was followed by another translation, entitled “*Camilla*,” got up in a similar manner.

These operas succeeding, Congreve and Sir John Vanbrugh, on the first night of opening their new Haymarket Theatre, performed a translated opera called the “*Temple of Love*:” but the music being German, and the fashion of that time, as at the present, inclining chiefly towards the compositions of Italian masters, the speculation of these old dramatists was not a successful one. Addison endeavoured to administer to the growing taste by writing an opera called “*Rosamond*,” to which Thomas Clayton attempted to compose; but as this was not only not an Italian production, but about the poorest stuff that ever assumed the name of music, its existence lasted only three nights. It was succeeded by “*Thomyris, Queen of Scythia*,” from the pen of Motteux, with a selection from the compositions of Scarlatti and

Bononcini; which, although not so much relished at first as "Camilla," the following season rivalled it in popularity for a period of six weeks—they being then played at Drury Lane on alternate nights.

In these operas the performers were a motley crew, half English and half Italian; and as it was not always possible for the latter to employ the translation, some were heard singing their portion of the libretto in their native tongue, while their coadjutors proceeded in English. The most celebrated of them were Valentini Urbani, an Italian female styled "the Baroness," Hughes, Lawrence, Ramondon, Leveridge, Margarita, Mrs. Tofts, Mrs. Lindsey, and Mrs. Turner.

As an example of the *poetry* of these translations, we give the following passages from "Love's Triumph."

"No more trial  
Nor denial;  
Be more kind,  
And tell your mind;

So tost,  
So crost,  
I'm sad,  
I'm mad ;  
No more then hide your good nature,  
Thou dear creature !

Balk no longer  
Love nor hunger,  
Both grow stronger  
When they're younger ;  
But pall  
And fall  
At last,  
If long we fast."

In the following year an effort was made to introduce French dancing in a new pastoral opera called "Love's Triumph," written by Cardinal Ottoboni, the music by Carlo Cesarini Giovanni and Francesco Gasparini ; but it was in vain to make any attempt to divert popular taste from Italian music. The ensuing winter was distinguished by the arrival in this country of the celebrated Nicolini Grimaldi—the Nico-

lini mentioned by Addison in his journal of a Woman of Fashion. He appeared in a translated piece entitled "Pyrrhus and Demetrius," originally written by Adriano Morselli, with music by Alessandro Scarlatti, but now arranged, with a new overture and additional airs, by Nicolo Haym. Nicolini sang Italian; but despite of the confusion of the two languages exhibited in the opera in which he performed, it speedily became so great a favourite that he chose it for his own benefit, which took place January 5th, 1709. This singer was exceedingly fashionable, and obtained eight hundred guineas for his services for the season. At that period this was thought an enormous sum, but it is little more than a week's salary for some of our performers of the present day.

The confusion of tongues occasioned by one part of an opera being sung in Italian, and another in English, having at last been found intolerable, the first performed entirely in

Italian was produced in January 1710. It was called "Almahide," and the music has been attributed to Bononcini. Nicolini and Margarita took the principal parts, and in the productions allotted them they were enabled to exhibit vocal effects hitherto unknown in England. The music became remarkably popular. The composers most approved of appear to have been Scarlatti, Gasparini, and Bononcini, till Handel arrived in this country, when in the following year he produced in a fortnight his "Rinaldo," which speedily placed him on a footing with those distinguished masters. After its success he was employed every season in furnishing new productions for the operatic company then performing at the Queen's Theatre—as the Opera House was at that time called. There he brought out his pastoral, "Il Pastor Fido," which lasting only four nights, was followed in the succeeding year by his tragedy "Teseo," which was performed twelve times. In May 1715, the same eminent composer pro-

duced his “Amadigi: that enjoyed a more favourable reception, and in the following February was repeated by command. This season was also distinguished by the introduction of the *viol d'amour*, an instrument which was first heard in this country in a symphony performed by Signor Attilio Ariosti, between the acts of Amadigi. During this period several other operas were played, but they met with no great success, and the company was dissolved in 1717.

The Italian opera, however, had obtained too many admirers in England to be thus easily disposed of; and although for three years no performance of the kind was attempted, the leaders of the fashionable world were busily employed in endeavouring to re-establish it on a more solid foundation. With this object in view, in 1720 a fund of £50,000 was raised by subscription, to which the king contributed £1,000, to found an establishment, consisting of a governor, deputy-governor, and twenty direc-

tors, for the support and cultivation of musical genius in this country. Noblemen of the highest rank, and gentlemen of great wealth and influence, speedily became its officers. It was styled the Royal Academy of Music, and the patronage it possessed enabled the directors to engage the services of the three most eminent musicians then known, in order to create an Italian opera in England worthy of rivalling that in other countries: these were Bononcini, Attilio, and Handel. The last was started off in search of a company, and at Dresden he engaged Senesino, Berenstadt, Boschi, and the Durastanti, performers of the highest celebrity. The house opened, in April 1720, with the opera called "Numitor," composed by Giovanni Porta of Venice, with scenery and decorations superior to those of any previous operatic representation seen in this country; but it not being approved of, Handel, five nights afterwards, produced his first production for the Royal Academy of Music, "Radamisto," which, though

only in the first season sustaining ten performances, ultimately obtained considerable popularity.

The “Narcisa” of Domenico Scarlatti was brought out May 30th, but was endured only five nights. In the autumn all the company had arrived, and Bononcini’s “Astarto” was represented with considerable success, but without producing any great sensation. The performances of the season, 1721, were “Radamisto” once, “Astarto” four times, a new pasticcio called “Arsace,” and a new opera called “Muzio,” in three acts; of which the first was composed by Attilio, the second by Bononcini, and the third by Handel. The following year the novelties were Handel’s “Floridante,” “Ottone,” and “Flavius;” Bononcini’s “Crispo,” and “Erminia;” and “Caius Marcius Coriolanus,” by Attilio Ariosti. Notwithstanding, however, the great exertions made by these celebrated composers, carried on with unabated vigour for several years, assisted by the talents of Senesino, and

the rest of the company, the speculation was not successful. The subscribers were dilatory in paying their subscriptions, and the public papers contained advertisements threatening the defaulters with exposure of their names and the “utmost rigour of the law.” This method of making patrons did not succeed, for the court of directors continued year after year to call for fresh payments, and in 1728 it was discovered that the whole of the £50,000 had been expended, together with the funds resulting from the sale of tickets, and from the sums paid for admission at the doors, whilst debts had been incurred to a large amount. Here ended the Royal Academy of Music, but the Italian Opera still survived, as we find from this advertisement: “Mr. Handel, who is just returned from Italy, has contracted with the following persons to perform in the Italian operas; Signor Bernacchi, who is esteemed the best singer in Italy; Signora Merighi, a woman of a very fine presence, an excellent actress, and a very good

singer, with a counter-tenor voice; Signora Strada, who hath a very fine treble voice, a person of singular merit; Signor Annibale Pio Fabri, a most excellent tenor, and a fine voice; his wife, who performs a man's part exceeding well; Signora Bertoldi, who has a very fine treble voice; she is also a very genteel actress, both in men and women's parts; a bass voice from Hamburgh, there being none worth engaging in Italy."

This company fared no better than the preceding one. Although Handel brought out a multitude of clever productions, and obtained the assistance of the finest masters that were to be found, the Italian opera in England was not increasing in popularity. The Earl of Middlesex, at the head of a small body of noblemen and gentlemen, supported him for several years, but their assistance was not always wisely rendered, and in the end produced more mischief than good. It was not for want of liberality that the speculation was not successful. Sene-

sino obtained fifteen hundred guineas for a single season, and Farinelli, who was more popular in England than even Nicolino, after a short sojourn here acquired a fortune, purchased an estate in his own country, and to show his gratitude to the source whence his wealth had been derived, erected there a temple, and had it dedicated to English folly. When Farinelli left the opera company in the Haymarket, it was abandoned by the directors. Heidegger became its lessee, and engaged Handel to superintend its performances; but the patronage he received was so limited, that towards the close of the season the manager put the following advertisement in the newspapers.

“ Opera House, May 24th. All persons that have subscribed, or are willing to subscribe, twenty guineas for an Italian opera to be performed next season under my direction, are desired to send ten guineas to Mr. Drummond,

the banker, who will give them a receipt, and return the money in case the opera should not go on.

Signed, "J. J. HEIDEGGER."

The subscriptions not coming in, no performance took place; and Handel then hired the theatre of its lessee for the purpose of bringing out his oratorios. Here were heard his "Saul," "Alexander's Feast," "Il Trionfo del Tempo e della Verita," and "Israel in Egypt." In 1739, the same composer produced his "Jupiter in Argos," a dramatic production, relieved by concertos on the organ; and in 1740 and the following year, he brought on the stage of the theatre at Lincoln's Inn, which he hired for the purpose, three musical entertainments, — his serenata "Parnasso in Festa," first produced in 1734, his operetta "Imeneo," and a musical drama, "Deidamia;" but the very slight impression they made induced Handel to confine himself entirely to the

production of oratorios. A pasticcio entitled "Lucio Vero," originally produced in 1716, of which the chief portion of the music was his, was performed at the opening of the King's Theatre in November 1747, and was continued with remarkable success till Christmas, being the last of nearly fifty operatic productions this fertile writer had presented to the musical world in England, that were performed at the Opera House previous to its being closed in 1750, partly from the want of support, and in some measure in consequence of the flight of the manager Dr. Croza, who, not being more fortunate than his predecessors in office, made his escape before his speculation had led him to a prison. Bononcini entered into a spirited rivalry with Handel; but, talented as was this composer, he had no chance against the latter's wonderful resources. Pescetti was still less successful, and even the genius of Galuppi could not carry on the contest on anything resembling equal terms. Pergolesi,

Gluck, Paradies, Ciampi, and several other masters of less celebrity, were occasionally resorted to, but such of their works as were attempted would not bear comparison with the masterpieces of the sublime Handel. Notwithstanding, however, his extraordinary genius, and the rapidity with which he produced his works, and his continual endeavours to get together a company worthy of performing them, the Italian opera was not heard in England for four years, when the arrival of the celebrated singer Mingotti led to another attempt to establish it; but even her exertions, assisted by those of the leader of the band, Giardini, an accomplished musician, who shared the management with Mingotti, did not meet with sufficient patronage. Signora Mattei and her husband Trombetta, vocalists of considerable reputation, also had the honour of being nearly ruined by the same speculation. The most successful performances at this period were the "Andromaca" of Jomelli, and "Il Filosofo

di Campagna" by Galuppi—productions, the popularity of which reflect credit upon English taste. John Christian Bach arrived in this country from Italy, where he had deserved and attained great reputation as a composer, and was immediately engaged by the manager of the Italian Opera, in the hope his genius would support that sinking establishment. Accordingly, in 1763, he produced his "Orione o sia Diana Vendicata," and "Zanaida;" and the remarkable talent they displayed attracted tolerable though not very productive audiences. The chief performers after this season were Signor Manzoli and Signora Scotti.

The opera commenced, in 1765, under the management of Messrs. Gordon, Vincent, and Crawford; but these gentlemen appeared to be hastening fast to the fate of their predecessors, when they were saved from ruin for the time by the production of Piccini's delightful "La Buona Figliuola." "La Schiava," by the same composer, was also singularly successful, but

his other efforts effected no such results. He was succeeded in public favour by the charming Sacchini, and the no less distinguished Anfossi; but their exertions were not more advantageous to the Italian opera in England, than had been those of Handel and Bach; and, again overwhelmed with debts, and suffering from ruinous litigation, that establishment ceased, and was not revived for several years.

It will be seen from what has been stated in these pages, that the patronage extended to foreign music, till after the middle of the last century, was insufficient for the support of an Italian theatre in London. Musical taste, however, was advancing in the best society of the metropolis, and professors of talent were liberally supported as teachers of the harpsichord, violin, and singing. Bach became instructor to the queen, and remained her chamber musician, and a fashionable composer also, till he died in the year 1782. Giardini was supported by many ladies of rank, in whose

houses he, in conjunction with Signora Mincotti, frequently gave concerts. The prima donna and the talented violin-player were on such occasions assisted by their own pupils, Mrs. Fox Lane, Lady Milbanke, and Lady Edgecumbe taking the harpsichord, while Lady Rockingham, the dowager Lady Carlisle, and Miss Pelham, exerted their vocal abilities.

Among the other musical entertainments then in vogue, was the Ridotto, first introduced in this country in 1722, which consisted of a selection of songs sung chiefly by Senesino, Baldassari, Mrs. Anastasia Robinson, and Salvai, after which the performers on the stage joined the company in the pit, by passing over a bridge that connected the two, which was a signal for the commencement of a ball; this concluded the amusements of the evening. Ranelagh Gardens was the original speculation of Mr. Lacy, a joint patentee with Garrick in Drury Lane Theatre. They were prettily planned, extending down to the Thames; a superb

orchestra, from which concerts of vocal and instrumental music were given, was erected in the centre of a capacious rotundo, with boxes for refreshments round the interior, in which part of the company sat, whilst the rest promenaded in full dress before them. At first, the chief vocal pieces performed were oratorio chorusses; but at a rival establishment (Vauxhall) solos for the voice had become so attractive, that it was found necessary to make them a principal feature in the performances at these gardens; and Beard, a celebrated tenor, and Frasi, a singer of considerable talent, were soon heard delighting their frequenters. A display of fireworks concluded the entertainments, which were often closed at an hour that allowed of a late supper being taken at Vauxhall, which in the course of a few years superseded its fashionable rival in the public estimation. At this place Lowe, Reinhold, and Mrs. Arne, were the first vocalists: afterwards Mrs. Weichsell, the mother of Mrs. Billington; In-

aledon, Dignum, Miss Feron, (since Mrs. Glossop,) Mrs. Bland, and most of the popular singers of their time, were heard here. For a considerable period Hook (the father of Theodore Hook, the novelist) composed the Vauxhall ballads, which were usually the popular songs of the season. He was succeeded by John Parry, who, after labouring in his vocation as industriously as his predecessor, had to make way for Henry Bishop. These gardens have also been distinguished for possessing a fine band, particularly at the latter end of the last century, when the principal instrumental performers in the kingdom found places in the orchestra.

Marylebone Gardens, another place of public resort, of greater antiquity than either Ranelagh or Vauxhall, were first brought into notice by its musical performances in 1769, at which period they were purchased by Dr. Arnold, and having been newly decorated with considerable taste, were opened to the public

with burlettas and other entertainments, for which the Doctor composed the music. Concerts were given in Hanover-square as early as 1763, at first by Bach and Abel, and continued to be a source of attraction for many years after. Musical entertainments of a similar nature were held also in commodious rooms in other parts of the town, and on these occasions every novel performance was sure of attracting a full audience. Of the instrumental wonders witnessed in the first half of the last century, a few are worthy of notice. In 1703 Mrs. Champion, a singer of some celebrity, performed for her benefit at Lincoln's Inn Theatre, the first solo ever publicly heard on the harpsichord. About the same period the first solo of Corelli heard in England was played on the violin by Mr. Dean : a few years later, Master Dubourg, a boy of twelve years of age, exhibited remarkable talent on the same instrument; and the extraordinary violin performances of Castrucci delighted the town soon afterwards.

But the great musical marvel of the age was the performance of Mrs. Sarah Ottey on three instruments—the bass-viol, violin, and harpsichord. This was rivalled by Joachim Frederic Creta, on two French horns. The little prodigy, Master Knutzen, at seven years of age, attracted crowds by his performance on the harpsichord; and another juvenile violinist, John Clegg, created no less astonishment. The ability of Caporale and Pasqualino on the violincello; of Guiseppi van Martini, Vincent, and Kytch, on the hautboy; Boston, Wiedeman, and Ballicourt, on the flute; Valentine Snowdon the trumpet; Roseingrave, Greene, Robinson, Magnus, James, Kelway, Keeble, Gladwin, and Stanly, a blind man, on the organ, displayed to the musical world what might be done on their several instruments; and Corbet, the first leader of the opera, did as much to prove to what advantage skilful playing might be cultivated in concerto pieces. These performances were not without producing satisfac-

tory effects upon the lovers of music in England. Several amateurs became celebrated performers, and in some instances composers: as one instance of this, we mention the Earl of Kellie, a violin-player of no ordinary ability, whose overture to the "Maid of the Mill" affords evidence of undoubted talent.

Giardini increased the popularity of the violin, in which object he was ably assisted by Lolli, Pinto, Barthelemon, and Cramer. The viol da gamba found a most skilful player in Charles Frederick Abel; Crosdil and Cervetto were violoncello performers of great celebrity; and Fischer made his hautboy discourse such music, as effaced the impression left upon the public mind by his predecessors. While such attention was paid to the orchestra, the voice was cultivated with equal care. The principal foreign singers met with talented pupils, who were afterwards found acquisitions to the English stage, and in some instances to the Italian also. A few of the most distin-

guished vocalists of the Italian opera, by acquiring a knowledge of the English language, were enabled to obtain considerable popularity as singers of English songs. They assisted at oratorios, appeared at some of the English theatres, and were usually the chief attraction at public concerts. In this state of things another attempt was made to establish an Italian opera in this country, which was commenced under favourable auspices, with the arrival of Rubinelli and Mara, who first appeared in London in the season of 1786, in the opera of "Virginia," composed by Tarchi. Madame Mara had sung for two or three years previously at a series of concerts which had been given every season at the Pantheon in Oxford street; but in the opera she had more scope for the display of her fine voice, and there made a very powerful impression. Signor Rubinelli succeeded Pacchierotti, who had been almost as much admired by the ladies as his more celebrated countryman, Farinelli. He

was equally efficient as a singer and as an actor, and for several years was the chief male attraction at the King's Theatre, the oratorios, and the principal public and private concerts.

Mara had not long enjoyed her celebrity as a *prima donna* without finding it threatened by powerful rivals, in the persons of Signora Storace and Mrs. Billington. Storace made her first appearance at the King's Theatre with Signor Borelli, a basso of remarkable talent, in Paisiello's comic opera, "Gli Schiavi per Amore," in which she established her reputation. Billington had made a name for herself, as a singer of English operatic music, on the stage, at the concert and the oratorio, wherein she distinguished herself above every competitor, till she left this country on a visit to Italy, where she stayed six years, and returned so improved, that Storace, who during that time had succeeded her on the English stage with an effect that no other singer had produced there, found her popularity affected by her re-appear-

ance. She was not engaged at the King's Theatre, at which her brother, Mr. Weichsell, was leader, till the season of 1802, when she made her first appearance on that stage, on the 4th of December, in Nasolini's serious opera "Merope," wherein she produced such effect as secured her re-engagement the following season, and her unrivalled popularity as long as her voice lasted.

Although we had almost every season a new prima donna, not one attracted sufficient attention to be considered formidable to Mara, Storace, or Billington, till Madame Banti made her appearance on the 26th of April, 1794, in Bianchi's opera, "Semiramide, o la vendetta di Nino." The reputation this accomplished singer had acquired in Italy had preceded her into England, but her performance proved that her merits had not been exaggerated. She was equally admirable in the bravura as in the cantabile; possessed a voice remarkable for its sweetness, power, and flexibility, and was a

graceful actress. She soon became fashionable, and the next season repeated her personification of the same character, having Michael Kelly as a coadjutor, who on that occasion made his bow to an Italian opera audience. Her fine singing and acting, aided by the operatic talents of Viganoni, Benelli, and Morelli, attracted such excellent houses at the King's Theatre, that at this period (about the close of the last century) the Italian opera might at last be said to have been established in England.

Music now began to be very generally cultivated in the higher circles. Concerts were held at the houses of several of the principal nobility, in which many of them assisted. The Prince of Wales and the Duke of Gloucester were performers on the violoncello, and the Duke of Cumberland on the violin, and they frequently joined the private orchestra at Carlton Palace, and at Lord Hampden's. The Duke of Queensberry and Lord Boyle were also liberal patrons of music. The professional

concerts were well attended, especially those of Salomon, which introduced into this country many distinguished musicians. On the violin, Salomon, Jarnovicki, and Viotti; on the piano, Schroéter, Pleyel, Clementi, and Dussek, were the most celebrated. Madame Gautherot, from Paris, also came forward as a violin-player, and it has been asserted that she was the first female who attempted a concerto on that instrument before an English audience; but she was preceded twenty years before by Madame Syrmen, whose performances excited great astonishment, as well as by Mrs. Sarah Ottey, mentioned in a previous page. Florio and Graeff were the principal flute-players about the conclusion of the last century; Schwartz and Holmes on the bassoon, Mahon on the clarionet, Sarjent on the trumpet, and Stamotz and Shield on the tenor.

The taste of the musical public had undergone a considerable change during the last half of the eighteenth century. Handel was still

popular, but only in his oratorios or concertos.\* Bononcini was listened to no more in an entire opera. The harpsichord lessons of Domenico Scarlatti, Alberto, and Paradies, had made way for the piano-forte sonatas of Haydn, Pleyel, and Dussek. The operas performed at the King's Theatre were usually selected from the works of Cimarosa, Gluck, Paisiello, Sarti, Sacchini, and Winter; which having the advantage of a fine orchestra and a company of vocalists, the best the continent could supply, rarely failed of exciting intense admiration. By these judicious performances the Italian opera in England became so fashionable in this country, that in the higher circles a box at the opera was thought as necessary as a residence in town.

\* An attempt was made at the King's Theatre, in 1787, by Dr. Arnold, to make Handel's operatic music fashionable, by a selection of that master's productions, introduced in an opera called "Giulio Cesare in Egitto;" but, even with the assistance of Mara and Rubinelli, it was only heard a few nights.

Madame Banti was retained as a favourite, notwithstanding that, besides being obliged to maintain a contest with Mara, Storace, and Billington, she found rivals in Madame Morighelli and Madame Bolla, and in fact in every prima donna that made a successful appearance at the King's Theatre. She at last was forced to make way for Mrs. Billington, who was so much the idol of the musical public as to eclipse every competitor, till the arrival of the celebrated Grassini. It may be in the remembrance of veteran frequenters of the opera, the appearance of these accomplished singers in 1804, in Winter's opera, "Il ratto di Proserpine," and how exquisitely their fine voices harmonised in the pathetic duo in the second act. Grassini showed herself an admirable actress and a most expressive singer. Her voice was of a very rich quality, and she employed it with the talent of a superior musician. Viganoni was associated with them in the same opera, and the effect produced by them in the terzetto

“*Mi lasci*” was a musical treat of exceeding rarity. The following season these celebrated singers were assisted by Storace, Morelli, and Braham, it being the first appearance of the latter gentleman at the King’s Theatre; and the style in which they sang the music of Martini’s beautiful opera “*La Cosa Rara*,” proved a source of the greatest gratification to the subscribers. Braham was much admired. He had previously gained a well-deserved celebrity by his performances in several English operas at Covent Garden, and by singing at concerts and oratorios; and the manner in which he acquitted himself on this occasion led to his re-engagement.

At this period Madame Catalani was creating on the continent the great celebrity by which she for many years afterwards became distinguished, and such marvellous accounts of her execution had preceded her into this country, that when she made her *début* at the King’s Theatre, in Portagallo’s grand serious opera,

“Semiramide,” the house was crowded to an excess never before known. Her rich, powerful, and flexible organ, and her easy yet brilliant vocalization, excited the most enthusiastic applause, and by the time she advertised her benefit in the following season, wherein she performed the first act of the serious opera, “La Morte di Mithridate,” and afterwards with the same brilliant success appeared in the first act in the comic “Il Fanatico per la Musica,” she had displaced Mrs. Billington as the reigning favourite. Her popularity now became immense. She was the first singer called on to sing one song three times, which occurred during her performance in the Italian comic opera, “La Freschetana.” Her success spoiled her. She became arrogant and capricious, and exacted for her engagements terms unparalleled in the annals of foreign extortion. In this, however, it is but just to say she was much exceeded by some of her successors.

The first prima donna who made any de-

ided impression after Catalani was Madame Bertinotti Radicati, who made her début, in 1810, in the serious opera, "Zaira. She was ably assisted by Signor Trammezzani, a talented singer, who performed in comic and serious characters with equal ability; but Catalani still maintained her supremacy. In 1813, the latter was associated at the opera for the first time with Mrs. Dickons, (previously of considerable celebrity as Miss Poole,) who played the Countess in Mozart's comic opera, "Le Nozze di Figaro," to Catalani's Susannah, with admirable effect. They were both re-engaged the following season, which was distinguished also by the return of Grassini, who was most rapturously received. No very important new engagement was made after this in the Italian company till the arrival of Madame Fodor, who made her first appearance, in 1816, in Paer's "Griselda," wherein she produced great effect, particularly in the air "Griselda Sa-reggio." Naldi, an excellent baritone, who

made his début, as far back as 1806, in Gaglielmi's comic opera, "Le Due Nozze ed un Marito," was also greatly applauded in the same opera. Fodor acted with Braham, when the season was more advanced, with equal success, in "La Clemenza di Tito," and was re-engaged the following season. This year is a remarkable one in the annals of the opera, as it boasts the introduction to the English public of Madame Pasta, Madame Camporese, Signor Crevelli, and Signor Ambrogetti. Of these, the three first commenced their career at the King's Theatre in Cimarosa's grand serious opera "Penelope," being its earliest performance in England. The expression of Pasta, her splendid vocalization, and fine acting, were instantly recognised; due justice was also done to the graceful singing of Camporese, and the taste exemplified in Crevelli's management of a tenor voice of considerable power and compass. But they were heard to most advantage in "Le Nozze de

Figaro," in which Ambrogetti appeared as the Count; Fodor as the Countess; Camporese as Susanna; Pasta as the Page; and Naldi as Figaro. So brilliant a cast has rarely been met with; and with a result equally favourable they performed together, on the 12th of the following April, in another splendid opera of Mozart, "Il Don Giovanni."

Pasta's impersonations were considered as the finest things of the kind ever seen in England—those of a tragic character especially. Her Medea, her Desdemona, her Tancredi, and Romeo, were masterpieces of acting. Ambrogetti was also a distinguished actor. Who that has ever enjoyed it, can forget his thrilling performance in the serious opera, "L'Agnese?" It has been stated that, before he attempted it, he visited Bedlam, and, from the maniacs there confined, drew the extraordinary picture of a madman he represented on the stage. This celebrated production of Paer's we have only seen once performed since, and

that was within the last five or six years, for the benefit of Tamburini, who played the principal character well, but not with the effect of his predecessor. Crevelli did not retain his place on the boards of the King's Théâtre ; he soon afterwards commenced as a teacher of singing in London, which he still remains.

In the summer of 1818, Signor Garcia, the father of Malibran, made his débüt on this stage, on the occasion of the first performance of Rossini's very popular "*Il Barbiere di Seviglia*," in which he acquitted himself with great credit, both as a singer and as an actor. He had a tenor voice of excellent quality, which he displayed to particular advantage in the music of this charming opera. In the following year he repeated the character (Conte d'Almaviva) to the Figaro of Placci, the Rosina of Madame Georgia Bellochi, and the Don Bartolo of Ambrogetti, with increased popularity. It was the first season of Bellochi and Placci ; the former possessed a fine soprano, and the latter a baritone of a

remarkably rich tone ; and the singing of both afforded the utmost satisfaction. Madame Rouzi de Bagnis, and Signor de Bagnis, in 1821, succeeded them, and the delicacy of the lady's voice, and the buffo qualities of the gentleman, were much approved of for a season or two. Signora Caradori joined the company the following year, and her sweet voice and finished style found numerous admirers. Her first character in England was that of the Page, in "Le Nozze di Figaro." Garcia was still engaged here in 1823, and particularly distinguished himself in the "Ricciardo e Zoroaldo ;" the beautiful trio, as sung by him, Camporese, and Madame Vestris, who had already obtained considerable reputation as an operatic singer, elicited an unanimous encore.

One of the great attractions of the following season was Madame Colbran Rossini, the wife of the celebrated composer, (who had just been engaged as director and composer of the theatre;) but, though possessed of considerable

advantages both in person and talent, she suffered by a comparison with Catalani and Pasta, who performed during the same period. In the summer of 1825, the lovers of music in England were advertised of the first introduction to them of a quality of voice which must have been strange to most of their ears, and some of the public journals went so far as to denounce the exhibition; notwithstanding which, Signor Velluti was favourably heard at the King's Theatre in Meyerbeer's "Il Crociato in Egitto," in the part of Armando, which had been written expressly for him, in which opera he was ably assisted by a young débutante, of extraordinary promise, in the character of Felicia. This was MARIA FELICIA GARCIA, the subject of these volumes.

By this time musical taste in this country had made prodigious advances; for, since the commencement of the present century, some of the finest compositions ever written were produced at the King's Theatre, and executed by

vocal and instrumental performers capable of doing them justice. Their popularity in England is an undoubted proof of the progress of English taste. Of these operas, we have to notice the masterpieces of Mozart and Rossini, which speedily became established favourites, and seem to obtain increased admiration at every repetition. The richness of their instrumentation, the beauty of their vocal solos, and the no less delightful character of their harmonised pieces, combined to effect a degree of intellectual gratification, which, it may safely be asserted, no art but music could have produced. We cannot with such certainty compliment the subscribers to the Italian opera on their improvement in musical taste since then. They appear too much enamoured of Donizetti, and other composers of the same unoriginal character—writers rather of *solfeggi* than music. In other respects, the performances at the King's Theatre, and the crowded audiences they attract, indicate a much more

reputable judgment. Grisi has almost reconciled us to the loss of Malibran—Lablache rivals the achievements of Farinelli, and Rubini has excelled all his predecessors. Instrumental players have arrived at a similar perfection; the last century brought forth nothing like the performances of Paganini on the violin, Lindley on the violoncello, Bochsa on the harp, and Thalberg on the piano; and vocal and orchestral music are cultivated to an extent and with a success in England never previously known.

**MEMOIRS OF  
MADAME MALIBRAN,  
BY  
THE COUNTESS DE MERLIN.**



# MEMOIRS, &c.

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## CHAPTER I.

Manuel Garcia, the father of Madame Malibran—His talent as an actor and singer—He quits Spain and proceeds to France and Italy—His performance at the Opera in Paris—Commencement of Maria Garcia's musical studies—Her voice and intonation—Garcia's severity in the instruction of his daughter—Maria's fear of her father's displeasure.

MARIA GARCIA was born in Paris, in the year 1808. Her father, Manuel Garcia, was a Spaniard, and was for many years a popular actor and singer at the Prince's Theatre at Madrid.

Conscious, however, that his musical education was imperfect, and that he had within him the germ of something greater than had yet been shown, he left Spain, and visited Paris, where his daughter was born. From Paris he proceeded to Italy, and after a few years' study he returned to the French capital, where his great talent was acknowledged by the most unqualified applause. His performances of Count Almaviva, of Otello, and Don Giovanni, will never be forgotten by those who witnessed them.

Garcia devoted himself to his musical studies with the most energetic perseverance, and in a short time he commenced the musical education of his daughter. The violence and irritability of his temper, joined to the energy with which he himself surmounted the difficulties of musical study, rendered him anything but an easy task-master.

Maria Garcia's first years of practice were painful and tedious. Nothing short of that firmness of character, with which nature had so

liberally endowed her, could have made her a musician. Her aptitude for musical study was but slowly developed, and her voice wanted flexibility; yet, in spite of all these disadvantages, she resolutely persevered, and she overcame each fresh difficulty with increasing courage. Some credit is doubtless due to her father: he never allowed the plea of "I cannot" to prevail. In his opinion the determination to conquer difficulties was sufficient; he admitted of no excuse, no apology. To resolve was to do; to fail was want of perseverance.

Maria Garcia's voice was at first feeble. The lower tones were harsh and imperfectly developed, the upper tones were indifferent in quality, and limited in extent, and the middle tones wanted clearness. Her intonation was so false as to warrant the apprehension that her ear was defective. I have often heard her say that at the commencement of her vocal practice she would sometimes sing so much out of tune that her father in despair would leave the

piano and retire to another part of the house. Maria, then a mere child, would hurry after him, and with tears implore him to renew the lesson. "Did you hear how much you were out of tune?" Garcia would say. "O yes, papa." "Well, then, let us begin again." This serves to show that Garcia's severity was modified by the consideration of the possible; and that he felt how insufficient is even the most resolute determination in the effort to overcome certain organic defects.

One evening Maria and I were practising a duet into which Garcia had introduced some embellishments. Maria, who was then about fourteen years of age, was vainly endeavouring to execute a certain passage, and at last uttered the words "I cannot." In an instant the Andalusian blood of her father rose. He fixed his large eyes sternly upon her and said, "Did I hear aright?" In another instant she sang the passage perfectly. When we were alone, I expressed my surprise at this. "O!" cried she,

clasping her hands with emotion, "such is the effect of an angry look from my father, that I am sure it would make me jump from the roof of the house without hurting myself."

## CHAPTER II.

Contrast between Madame Malibran's feeble health and strong mental power—Her ardent temperament—Her self-denial, generosity, and charity—The unreserved frankness of her disposition—Difference between Maria Garcia and her sister Pauline—Promising talents of Pauline—Madame Malibran's performance of Desdemona—Effect she produced in the celebrated romance—Her power of sustaining the tones of her voice amidst the strongest excitement of feeling—Cause to which she assigned the acquisition of that power.

DURING her early years Maria Garcia showed symptoms of that delicacy of health which characterised her after life. Long ere she reached womanhood her spirit would struggle against her physical strength, rather than she would give up a difficulty, or allow it to be beyond her power

to conquer. She would frequently swoon when overcome by the violent conflict which ever raged within her—the struggle between the mental energy and the delicate constitution with which nature had endowed her. Whilst suffering to her utmost powers of endurance, and struggling against pain and debility, this inimitable songstress has often won her brightest laurels.

Her impassioned and ardent feeling sometimes betrayed her into violent paroxysms of temper; but even on those occasions it was easy to soothe her by an appeal to her kindness and generosity; the voice of friendship, even in reproof, was hearkened to, and its counsels followed. She was ever ready to confess her error, to solicit pardon, and to atone for any injury she might have inflicted; in short, she made friends of all who knew her.

Madame Malibran has been accused of being avaricious and penurious. As far as concerned her own gratifications, she was so. Brought up

in a rigid school, with the example of her parents before her, she never indulged in those expenses and luxuries common to females in the theatrical profession. Her life was one of self-denial. On herself she never threw away money ; but, on the other hand, who that ever sought and needed her assistance, had cause to accuse her of avarice ? Who can say she was uncharitable ? Her whole income was at the disposal of others—her purse was ever open to the needy and deserving.

The unreserved frankness of her nature imparted a certain degree of *brusquerie* to her manners, especially in her professional intercourse. She was totally devoid of that sort of diplomatic disguise indispensable in certain dependent conditions. Her greatest fault was her inability to disguise her feelings. Though a first-rate actress on the stage, yet a child might read her thoughts when in her private and domestic character.

There is a painful necessity in the life of an

artist; viz. that of surrendering his judgment to the opinions of others. In this respect, the most celebrated actor or actress that ever trod the stage is a slave. The success or failure of an actor or singer often depends upon the mere caprice of an audience, whose wayward humour makes or mars the fate of talent. The feelings of a debutante should therefore be well schooled, ere she appears before the public. One day I made this remark to Garcia, and added a slight reproach on his severe treatment of one so likely to have much to suffer. "I am aware," replied he, "that the world blames me; but I am right. Maria can never become great but at this price: her proud and stubborn spirit requires a hand of iron to control it. Towards her younger sister, on the contrary, I have never had cause to exercise harshness, and yet she will make her way.\* This is the difference:

\* Pauline, though only seventeen years of age, promises to become an ornament to the stage, and a worthy successor to her talented and lamented sister.

the one requires to be bound by a chain, the other may be led by a silken thread." Such was the opinion of Garcia, who, in accordance with these notions, made his daughter pay dearly in her youth for the triumphs of her maturer years.

Everybody knows how admirably Maria Malibran sang the romance in the third act of Otello. Who can forget her tears, and the melancholy expression with which she addressed to Emilia the words, "Ricevi dei labri dell' amica il baccio estremo;" it was truly sublime.

One evening I occupied the stage-box during this performance. My whole soul was with her; I gazed on her with the deepest interest. I was entranced and overcome by the spell of the fascinating being before me. On our return home after the play, I asked her how she could sing so well under so strong an excitement of feeling—how she could manage her voice whilst her eyes were streaming with tears? She

naïvely answered, “ It is not the result of study ; I never practised this as an art. In my younger years, I have often found my eyes suffused with tears, whilst singing behind my father’s chair, and I have been afraid he should perceive me weeping. I therefore exerted every endeavour to form my notes correctly, fearing he might chide me for my folly. I have often sang while tears flowed down my cheeks.” Thus the severity of Garcia lent its aid to improve those extraordinary talents with which nature had endowed her. Her girlish sorrows gave her a power possessed by no other living singer : a power which has often wreathed her brows with crowns of triumph, and called forth the admiration and surprise of thousands.

## CHAPTER III.

Madame Malibran's talent for drawing—Her caricatures—  
Needle-work—Her power of conversing in various lan-  
guages—Incongruities in her disposition and manner—Her  
disregard of flattery—Her difficult musical exercises—Severe  
routine of study requisite for a public singer.

MADAME Malibran's facility in acquiring any accomplishment to which she applied her talent was truly extraordinary. She conquered difficulties which others would fear to encounter. Although her father strictly confined her attention to singing, yet she, at the same time, and, as it were, without effort, cultivated other accomplishments. She was a first-rate pianiste ; and though she never had a master to instruct her in

the art, yet she evinced exquisite talent for drawing—her caricatures were admirable. She never saw any fancy work, any sort of embroidery, or other needlework, that she could not instantly imitate, and often surpass. Her theatrical costumes were invariably the creation of her own fancy, and in many instances were actually made by herself. I have frequently seen her engaged at needlework whilst she was practising her singing; her stitches being as delicate as her notes. She could write and speak four or five languages with perfect facility; and I have heard her, in a mixed company, maintain a conversation with various individuals, speaking to each in a different language.

The disposition of Maria Malibran presented the strangest incongruities. She united in herself strength of mind and credulity, resolution and weakness. When elated to the highest pitch, the following instant would reduce her to the deepest despondency. She was generous

to excess, mean in trifles; bold, yet timid, alternately sublime and childish.

Maria appeared to have imbibed from the various classes in which she had mingled their various manners. She had received, from the different countries she had visited during her years of travel, impressions from each, which, strangely blended in her mind, often made her seem capricious and inconsistent.

She had a way, peculiar to herself, of creating friends. She spurned the ordinary road to the heart; she despised flattery herself, and never addressed it to others. It was not by insinuating manners that she won the good graces of those whose suffrage she sought. No; it was by bold eccentricity and originality, by candour, sometimes verging on unpoliteness. By the habit of freely expressing her feelings, she commanded and secured the love of all who knew her.

In her childhood, her father often made her sing before his friends, canons and nocturnes

of his own composition, being naturally anxious to give proof of her talents. But in later years he never permitted this: he strictly confined her practice to musical exercises—exercises the most dry, tedious, and laborious that can be imagined. How few can form any idea of the toil to which the young singer must be subjected, ere she can attain any degree of perfection in public performance; how few would envy the crown of glory so painfully earned !

## CHAPTER IV.

Garcia's method of instruction—Grassini, Pizzaroni, Pasta, &c.  
—Importance of the correct mode of exercising the voice—  
Garcia's remark on this subject—Defects of the old French  
school of singing—Method of practice for equalising the  
different parts of the voice—Requisite exercises for soprano  
voices—Extempore exercises practised by Garcia's pupils—  
Importance attached by Garcia to the practice of *Solfeggi*.

GARCIA's method of teaching singing was formed on the excellent model of those old musicians, the traces of whose style are daily vanishing even in Italy. This system did not consist in directing the practice of the pupil to a variety of *fiorituri*, which, like the fashions of the day, enjoy an evanescent favour, and are soon for-

gotten. Garcia's system of instruction was founded on principles whose superiority has been acknowledged in all ages of the musical art; those principles which have been studied by Grassini, Colbrand, Pizzaroni, Pasta, and other distinguished ornaments of the Italian scene. To these principles, seconded by high intelligence in their application, we are indebted to the most brilliant talent that has shed lustre on the musical drama of the present day—the talent of Maria Malibran.

The first objects to which the young singer should direct attention are—to equalise what may be termed the instrument of the voice, by correcting those imperfections from which even the finest organ is not exempt;—to augment the number of tones by constant and careful practice;\*—to draw breath quietly and without

\* Garcia used to say, "Those who wish to sing well should not practise without knowing how to practise. It is only by earning the secret of practising well that there is any possibility of learning to sing well."

hury — to prepare the throat for emitting the tone with clearness and purity, swelling the note gradually but boldly, so as to develop the inherent power of the voice, and finally to blend the notes in such a manner that each may be heard distinctly, but not sharply. But, on the other hand, it is requisite to guard against a false application of this principle, lest the student should fall into the defects of the old French method, by which one note was allowed to die away with a false expression of languid tenderness, and to fall, as it were, *en défaillance* on the succeeding tone. To blend the tones of the voice according to the best Italian method, the note should first be emitted in a *straight line*, (to employ a figurative expression,) and then form a curve, the intermediate tones being given merely by sympathetic vibration, and the voice should again fall on the required note with decision and clearness.\*

\* It is very difficult to give a perfectly clear and satisfactory explanation of the operations of a mechanism, the hidden mo-

Whatever be the quality of the voice, the singer should take especial care of the upper notes, and avoid too much practice upon them, for that part of the voice being most delicate, its quality is most easily injured. On the contrary, by practising more particularly on the middle and lower notes, they acquire strength, and an important object is gained, (which is in strict accordance with one of the essential principles of acoustics,) namely, that of making the grave tones strike the ear with the same degree of force as the acute tones.

To the adoption of this rational rule is to be ascribed the great superiority of the Italian

tion of which can only be guessed at from the vague observations of singers themselves. All conclusions, therefore, respecting the phenomena of the voice, must be drawn from very obscure sources. All persons, except singers, must regard these conclusions as mere metaphysical obscurities, and even to the majority of those who practise the art of singing, the management of the voice is rather the result of mechanical dexterity than of observation or reasoning.

to the French school of singing. By softening the upper tones, and giving strength to the lower and middle tones, either by dint of the accent of the voice, or the accent proper to the words, the ear is never offended, and the music penetrates to the soul of the hearer without any of that harshness which shocks and irritates the nerves. In like manner the demi-tints in a beautiful picture, by blending the colours one with another, charm the eye by producing a vague appearance of reality.

Exercises for strengthening the low and middle notes of the voice are more important for sopranos than for voices of any other class ; first, because, in general, that part of the voice is most feeble ; and next, because the transition from the *voce di petto* to the *voce di testa* tends to deteriorate the purity of some tones, and to impart a feebler, or, if I may so express myself, a *stifled* effect to others. It is, therefore, requisite to keep up a continual practice of the defective note with the pure note which follows

or precedes it, in order to obtain a perfect uniformity in their quality. This practice was one of the greatest difficulties which Maria Garcia had to surmount, the lower notes of her voice being strong and well toned, whilst the notes of transition were feeble and husky.

One important point in this method is the secret of developing the *voce di petto* in soprano voices. Garcia was convinced that breast tones existed in all voices of that class, but that the only difficulty consisted in the art of developing them.

In proportion as the voice of the pupil improved, it was Garcia's custom to prescribe exercises more and more difficult until every obstacle was surmounted; but he rarely noted down a set passage for his pupils. His method was to strike a chord on the piano, and to say to them, "Now sing any passage you please;" and he would make them execute a passage in this way ten or twenty times in succession. The result was, that the pupil sang precisely

that which was suited to his voice, and suggested by his taste. Solfeggi exercises, performed in this way, presented a character of individuality, being suggested by the feeling of the moment. Another advantage of this mode of practice was, that the pupil gained a perfect mastery over his voice by dint of exercising his own inspirations, and that he was at liberty to follow the dictates of his own taste without fear or hesitation.

Garcia never permitted his pupils, whilst they were in the course of tuition, to sing vocal compositions with words: he confined them strictly to Solfeggi. But when he considered any one of them sufficiently advanced he would say, "Now you are a singer; you may try anything you please—like a child out of leading-strings, you can *run alone*." It may be added, that Garcia invariably applied his principles most rigorously to those pupils on whom he founded the highest hopes.

Mr. J. C. ...  
Mr. J. C. ...

## CHAPTER V.

Maria Garcia's first appearance in public—Rossini's arrival in Paris—His *Siege of Corinth* and *William Tell*—Revolution in musical taste—Nuptial cantata—Amateur performance—Bordogni and Isabel—Impressions produced by Maria Garcia's first public performance.

MARIA GARCIA was only fifteen years of age when a circumstance occurred which led to her first appearance in public, and to the first developement of that talent which at a subsequent period of her life rendered her socelebrated.

Rossini had just arrived in Paris. His arrival formed an epoch in the musical annals of the French capital. But though his principal compositions were already well known and duly

appreciated in France, yet, in that country the genius of song still slumbered. Rossini appeared, and composed his *Siege of Corinth* and *Guillaume Tell*. These operas produced a total change in the style of vocal execution among the French.

A short time before he quitted Italy, Rossini had composed a nuptial cantata in honour of the marriage of my relative, M. de Penalver. This cantata, which consisted of four vocal parts, had never been heard in a complete form, not even with the piano-forte accompaniment. M. de Penalver, who happened to be in Paris at the time here alluded to, felt a desire to hear the piece with the full instrumental accompaniments. He expressed this wish to Rossini, with whom I was not then acquainted, adding that he should like me to take a part in the performance. The *Maestro*, who had a prejudice against amateur performances, coolly replied, "No, no, my dear sir, that must not be: I have just arrived in Paris," added he with a

smile, and you would have me commence with a *fiasco*. We will, if you please, get Isabel and Garcia to try the cantata with the piano-forte accompaniment: that will afford you an idea of it. M. Penalver urged him to accede to his wish; but all that he could obtain was Rossini's consent to hear me sing on the following day. The trial was made, and Rossini declared his willingness to have the piece performed with the full accompaniments. The orchestra was complete: wind instruments, drums, triangles—nothing was wanting; and the company was so numerous, that I was obliged to have my drawing-room doors taken off the hinges. The parts for the tenor and bass voices were assigned to Bordogni and Pelligrini; but we knew not where to find a contralto. In the midst of our embarrassment, Garcia, who had hitherto concealed the talent of his daughter, as a miser would hide a treasure, proposed that she should take the part.

At that time Maria's voice had attained a

considerable degree of perfection. Her *voce di petto* possessed all that power which subsequently excited such admiration, but the other parts of her voice were still harsh and husky; there was an obvious conflict of art against nature. In this, which may be termed her first public performance, Maria Garcia maintained a perfect self-possession. She manifested not the least trace of timidity. It seemed as though she felt a secret conviction of her future success, and that this presentiment, combined with a consciousness of the necessity of exertion, inspired her with that confidence indispensable to all whose talents are an object of public suffrage. To insure success in art, a just confidence in one's own resources is not less necessary than superior talent.

## CHAPTER VI.

Maria Garcia's *début* at the King's Theatre in London—An anecdote—Velluti—The duet from *Romeo e Giulietta*—Velluti's *fiorituri*—Extraordinary example of vocal talent on the part of Maria Garcia—Her improvised cadence—Velluti's jealousy—Garcia's departure for America—Maria's performance at New York—M. Malibran solicits her hand—Garcia's violence of temper—Maria in fear of her life—Her exclamations of alarm.

FROM Paris Garcia proceeded with his family to London, where his daughter made her *début* at the King's Theatre. One of her early performances was marked by an amusing incident: it serves to show the laudable ambition which animated the young singer, and the

courage with which she encountered difficulties at the very outset of her career. She had to sing with Velluti a duo in Zingarelli's *Romeo e Giulietta*. In the morning they rehearsed it together, and at that rehearsal, as at all preceding ones, Velluti, like an experienced stager, sang the plain notes of his part, reserving his *fiorituri* for the evening, in the fear that the young debutante would imitate them. Accordingly, at the evening performance, Velluti sang his solo part, interspersing it with the most florid ornaments, and closing it with a new and brilliant cadence, which quite enchanted the audience. The *musico* cast a glance of mingled triumph and pity on poor Maria, as she advanced to the stage-lamps. What was the astonishment of the audience to hear her execute the ornaments of Velluti, imparting to them even additional grace, and crowning her triumph with a bold and superb improvisation. Amidst the torrent of applause which followed this effort, and whilst trembling from the ex-

citements it occasioned, Maria felt her arm rudely grasped as it were by a hand of iron. Immediately the word "*Briccona!*!" pronounced in a suppressed and angry tone by Velluti, afforded her a convincing proof that every triumph carries with it its mortification.

I do not believe there is any living singer capable of venturing on a *tour de force* similar to that performed by Maria Garcia on this occasion. She was, at the time of her first appearance at the King's Theatre, only sixteen years of age.

Garcia next engaged himself and his family to perform at New York, and in consequence they all left England for America. Maria took the principal parts in several of Rossini's operas, and excited great admiration. She was particularly successful in *Desdemona* and *Cenerentola*, though the parts are so different from each other. The principal individuals of the American operatic company were Garcia, his daughter, his wife, and son; the others were merely

feeble auxiliaries. It was amusing to hear Maria describe the pains she took to make singers of performers who had no requisites for singing — not even voices. But, in spite of every obstacle, the performances were well got up.

Shortly after Garcia's arrival in America, M. Malibran, a French merchant established at New York, solicited the hand of Maria. Garcia refused his consent; but Maria, young as she was, began already to feel weary of her laborious public life and her filial dependence. She rejoiced at the idea of emancipating herself, and, in her girlish inexperience, little thought that, in breaking the parental chain, she would bind herself in fetters heavier and more lasting. She did not reflect that the soul of the artist, imbued with the fire of genius, can never relinquish the exercise of that art for which nature has fitted it, and that the hardest filial dependence is nevertheless the sweetest of all dependences. As we wander onward in the

journey of life, we all look back with affection and regard to the paternal home.

Garcia's temper created great unhappiness in his family. Madame Garcia, mild and gentle as an angel of peace, vainly strove to soothe the violence of her husband; but he became more and more violent and irritable. One evening *Otello* was to be performed: Garcia, who had been much out of humour during the day, was to play the part of the Moor, and his daughter that of Desdemona. In the scene in which *Otello* seizes Desdemona for the purpose of stabbing her, Maria perceived that the dagger which her father held in his hand was a real instrument of death, and not one of those sham weapons used by actors. Maria immediately recognised the dagger which her father brandished furiously in his hand. It was one which Garcia had purchased from a Turk a few days previously, and, at the time he bought it, he had remarked the peculiar sharpness of the blade. Maria beheld the deadly weapon approach her

bosom, and, frantic with terror, she uttered the words, "*Papa ! Papa ! por Dios no me mates !*" \* Poor Maria's terror, as may readily be supposed, was unfounded. Garcia had no intention of murdering his daughter. The fact was, that the stage-dagger being mislaid, he merely made use of his own as a substitute for it.

When Madame Malibran related to me this anecdote, I inquired what the audience thought of her strange exclamation. "Oh ! replied she, "no one seemed to be aware that anything extraordinary had occurred. My terror appeared to be nothing more than what was incidental to my part ; and as to my speaking Spanish, no one had the least suspicion that it was not very good Italian."

\* "Papa ! papa ! for Heaven's sake do not kill me ! "

## CHAPTER VII.

Maria Garcia's marriage—M. Malibran's bankruptcy—Garcia leaves the United States, and proceeds to Mexico—Noble exertions of Madame Malibran—She studies English singing—Her success on the American stage—Her generous endeavours to relieve her husband—She leaves America and returns to Europe—Her arrival in Paris—Renews her acquaintance with the authoress of these Memoirs—Favourable impression produced by her first visit—Anticipations of her success—The musical jury—The unbelievers converted.

M. MALIBRAN made brilliant promises to Garcia's family. Maria strongly urged her father to consent to the marriage, and at length it was concluded. In a few weeks after this event M. Malibran became a bankrupt, before he had performed the promises he held out to his wife's

family. This event exasperated to the utmost degree the violence of Garcia's temper. In the fear that he might be driven to some act of desperation, he was prevailed upon to leave the United States. He proceeded to Mexico with all his family, except Maria. She, on awaking from the brilliant dreams in which she had been nursed since her marriage, found herself in a foreign land, separated from her parents, and united to a man who was unable to protect her, and who, being deprived of the means of existence, had no resource but in the talents of his wife.

Maria Malibran was endued with that energy of character which rendered her capable of the noblest exertions. After the departure of Garcia and his family, the Italian company at New York was broken up. Madame Malibran immediately commenced the study of English vocal music, and made her appearance on the national stage.

What indefatigable patience, what active in-

telligence, were required to surmount the numerous difficulties which presented themselves to her at every step ! What mental courage she must have summoned to subdue the perturbation of spirit and the embarrassment attendant on her fallen circumstances ! Regarding her husband's bankruptcy merely as his misfortune, she thought only of soothing his distress. Her generous heart, which was always exalted to enthusiasm by the consciousness of doing good, enabled her to brave every obstacle. She succeeded beyond her hopes, and every evening a considerable sum of money was paid by the manager of the theatre to M. Malibran for his wife, who, in order to render the fruit of her exertions effectual, had entered into an agreement that her salary should be paid nightly.

Notwithstanding her brilliant success in America, imperative reasons induced M. Malibran to send his wife to Europe, and it was agreed that she should there resume her exer-

tions, and remit to him the emoluments derived from them.

Madame Malibran had not yet completed her twentieth year when she arrived in Paris. This was in December 1827. She went to reside with her husband's sister.

Though a native of Paris, yet the seclusion which her studies imposed on her had prevented her from forming any acquaintances during her previous residence in the French capital; consequently, on her return, after a few years' absence, she found herself completely desolate. A recollection of the regard I had cherished for her in her girlhood induced her to come to me.

This interesting young creature, a wanderer from a distant land, presented herself to me. Her dark silken hair hung in long ringlets on her neck, and she was simply attired in a dress of white muslin. Her youth, her beauty, her intelligence, her friendless and destitute condi-

tion, all combined to excite my deepest interest. I gazed on her with mingled feelings of sympathy and admiration. She seated herself at the piano, and I was charmed with her performance.

She expressed a wish to sing a duet with me, but she had not sung many bars, when suddenly stopping, and throwing her arms round my neck, she exclaimed, "O ! how this reminds me of the time when we used to practise together in papa's school ! How perfectly we understand each other !" Then she resumed her singing, to which I listened with wonder and admiration. In the evening I visited the Italian Opera, and, still under the influence of the enchantment I had experienced in the morning, I described in glowing terms the powers of the fair syren to several of my friends. "She is a perfect wonder," said I ; "her appearance will form an epoch in the musical world." "But," replied the person to whom I addressed these words, "no one has heard of her. If she were really

so clever as you describe, surely her reputation must have travelled hither before her." I again expressed my high opinion of her talents, and the conviction that she would create a wonderful sensation. "I strongly suspect," said one of my friends, "that her Spanish origin tends not a little to enhance her merits in your eyes." "I confess that has some claim to my interest, but not so much as you imagine. I certainly feel proud to reflect that this beautiful and talented creature has Spanish blood in her veins; but that is all. A little time will, I think, show the justice of my anticipations."

A few days afterwards I assembled at my house a sort of musical jury—a party of unbelievers. They were, as I expected, struck with astonishment on seeing and hearing her. Maria Malibran was sublime as a dramatic singer, but her most triumphant efforts were those little extempore *fiorituri*, with which she was wont to electrify her hearers in small private circles. On these occasions, when she

gave free scope to her own inspirations, she seemed like the very genius of music. What a fund of original ideas, what exquisite taste, did Madame Malibran evince, when she imparted new life to a composition, by adorning it, as it were, with the brilliant and vivid hues of the rainbow.

Before Madame Malibran had sung her first aria at my party, she had completely converted the little group of unbelievers into devout worshippers.

## CHAPTER VIII.

Madame Malibran's *débüt* at the Italian Opera in Paris—Her apprehension of failure—Disadvantages she had to contend against—Her triumphant success—Offers of engagements—She concludes an engagement with the manager of the Théâtre Italien—Her *débüt* in Desdemona—Versatility of her powers as a singer and actress—Remark of Crescentini—Madame Malibran withdraws herself from her husband's relations—She takes up her abode with Madame Naldi—Authority exercised by that lady—The Cashmere shawl.

MADAME MALIBRAN made her first appearance at the Grand Opera of Paris, in January 1828, in the part of Semiramide. The performance was for the benefit of Galli. For the first time in her life she felt timidity. She knew that on that night's performance her

future reputation depended. The part she had selected was not precisely fitted to her. The music did not fall on the best notes of her voice ; and she had another obstacle to contend against in the size of the theatre, which was larger than any in which she had heretofore sung. These disadvantages were calculated to intimidate her ; but nevertheless her natural courage enabled her to encounter them with spirit.

The first notes of her powerful voice which thrilled on the ears of the audience were followed by rapturous plaudits ; all who witnessed her performance pronounced her to be a *prima donna* of the highest talent. She now received liberal offers for engagements. She at first hesitated between the Théâtre Italien and the Grand Opera ; but she decided in favour of the former, and her choice was judicious. At the French opera, singing was at that time merely a sort of declamation, which would not have afforded free scope for the exercise of Madame

Malibran's peculiar talents. That style of singing, (in which the *cantabile* is nearly null,) requiring vast power of lungs, would, in a very few years, have exhausted the voice of Madame Malibran, who, in the conscientious performance of her professional duties, thought only of the present, and never considered the future. She concluded an engagement with the managers of the Théâtre Italien, and made her *début* in the part of Desdemona.

She speedily attained the most brilliant popularity. The Parisians were enthusiastic in their admiration and applause: and Madame Malibran, supported by the confidence which success inspires, frequently reached sublimity both in her singing and acting.

The vast compass of Madame Malibran's voice, together with the versatility of her talent, enabled her to perform in all Rossini's operas; and, in some instances, the two first parts in the same opera; for example, in *Semiramide*, in which she could sustain, in equal perfection,

the character of Arsace and that of the Queen of Babylon. Her personation of Desdemona was a touching picture of sensibility and melancholy. Her Rosina was the perfection of playful grace and arch gaiety; whilst she drew tears from the eyes of all who beheld her in Ninetta, in the *Gazza Ladra*. It is impossible to conceive a more perfect personification of resigned sorrow, partaking of fatalism.

Crescentini, when asked his opinion of a singer whose talent had been greatly and unjustly extolled, replied, "*Canta bene, ma non mi persuade.*" This observation could not have been applied to Madame Malibran. On hearing that fascinating singer, it was impossible not to identify oneself with her, because she identified herself with her part. Her impassioned soul, by some irresistible power of sympathy, communicated to others the sentiments which she so well experienced and expressed. Talent alone, whatever be its degree of superiority, is incapable of producing

this magical effect: true feeling is the secret spell. That which emanates from the heart has alone the power to reach the hearts of others.

Madame Malibran soon had reason to be dissatisfied with the treatment she experienced from her husband's relatives. She complained of the irksome tutelage to which she was subjected, both in person and purse; but the want of protection, and the fear of that censure which her extreme youth and her independent position might draw down upon her, induced her to prolong for some time her residence with her sister-in-law. However, one day, in a moment of irritation, she sent for a coach, and, taking with her her trunks, she drove off, unknown to her relatives, and took up her abode with Madame Naldi.

Availing herself of that freedom of manners which the theatrical profession admits of, she might, with perfect propriety, have resided alone; but she was young, and surrounded by

admirers, and in the *naïve* purity of her sentiments she felt the necessity of protection. She therefore submitted voluntarily to the authority of Madame Naldi, an old friend of her family, and a woman of imperious and austere manners. It was truly touching to see her yield to the advice, and submit to the little sacrifices which her friend exacted from her. To Madame Naldi she readily resigned that self-will which, to all others, was so unbending; and when, by any little fits of ill-humour or irritability, she thought she had offended her friend, she would load her with caresses, and ask her pardon with the humility of a child. All the letters which were addressed to Madame Malibran, as well as all which she herself wrote, were shown to Madame Naldi. That lady had the use of her money, and allowed her only as much as would provide her with the strictest necessaries.

Shortly before her death, at the time when her fortune was so brilliant, Madame Malibran

called the attention of a friend to an old Cashmere shawl which she wore ; " I prefer wearing this old shawl," she said, " to any other that I have got. It was the first Cashmere shawl I ever possessed, and I experience a certain degree of pleasure in calling to mind all the trouble it cost me to prevail on Madame Naldi to allow me to purchase it."

## CHAPTER IX.

The performance of separate acts of different operas—First introduction of that custom—Madame Malibran's disapproval of it—Effects of the custom on a musical audience—Due preparation of the ear for musical enjoyment—Advantage of displacing the acts of an opera—Different impressions produced by musical compositions, according to the modifications of time and place—Contrary opinions sometimes pronounced on celebrated singers—Sensations produced by excessive delicacy of the musical ear.

ABOUT the time of Madame Malibran's appearance in Paris commenced the custom, now so prevalent, of performing separate acts of different operas.

Our prima donna felt a certain degree of repugnance in conforming with this incongruity,

and she frequently told me that she experienced great difficulty in entering into the spirit of her part, when she had to commence at the second act. This may be readily conceived.

Such a mode of varying the amusements of the public, or rather of helping operatic managers out of their embarrassments, is certainly at variance with common sense. Nothing short of the indifference with which the Italians regard the meaning of an opera libretto could have given rise to the introduction of so absurd a practice.

But if this custom of dividing operas piece-meal be revolting to reason, it is not revolting to the ear of the amateur. The sense of hearing, like each of our other faculties, is endowed with a certain degree of power which has its first developement, its perfection, and decay.

However practised the ear may be in seizing the shades of harmony, it nevertheless requires a little preparation. The musical ear, on being roused from the apathy resulting from inaction,

experiences a certain degree of confusion, which is dispelled only in proportion as the action of the organ is restored by exercise. When that action is fully restored, the enjoyment is complete; because the sense being completely developed is in the plenitude of its power. The action of the organ at first communicates pleasure: after continued action weariness ensues; and at length fatigue irritates, and renders it not only incapable of enjoying, but even of judging.

Every one must have observed that the first *morceaux* of an opera are never duly appreciated, unless they have been previously heard as detached performances;—that the last pieces of an opera are rarely listened to, unless the drama be very short;—and that, in general, the success of an opera is decided between the end of the first act and the commencement of the second.

It is, therefore, evident that in order to multiply the enjoyment we derive from music, it

would be desirable to hear all the best portions of an opera at the moment when our faculties are in the plenitude of their power for receiving impressions; that is to say, not at the moment when they were first roused into action, or when wearied by exercise. Consequently, by displacing the acts of an opera, the different parts are heard at the proper moment; that is to say, when the musical ear is in the plenitude of its power.

I have oftener than once amused myself in deducing these ideas from my own impressions. Experience has fully convinced me of the justice of my observations.

This custom of performing separate acts of operas confers the charm of novelty on many old productions. I have often listened to musical compositions which appeared to be invested with additional freshness and beauty, merely by the modifications produced on my feelings by time and place!—How many confused and fugitive recollections—how many

sensations of the mind may be conjured up by the electric strains of songs which we have once listened to carelessly, and perhaps unconsciously !

The place we occupy in a theatre—the particular tier in which our box may be situated—the manner in which the sound reaches the ear—all these circumstances have their influence on the sensations of persons who are keenly alive to the charms of music.

On quitting the Opera House, how frequently do we hear the most contrary comments on the performance ! “ Rubini did not sing well,” says one; whilst another voice exclaims, “ Rubini was divine this evening.” “ Grisi was in excellent voice,” remarks one. “ I thought she screamed horribly,” says another. This diversity of opinions might perhaps be traced to the place which each interlocutor occupied in the theatre, and perhaps even to the degree of comfortable accommodation which his seat afforded.

It is certain that the sensibility of the musical ear may become so irritable that a harsh voice, or a false intonation, will cause the most annoying effects, even to the excitement of spasmodic sensations.

## CHAPTER X.

Mademoiselle Sontag's first appearance in Paris—Emulation of Madame Malibran—First duo sung by Madame Malibran and Mademoiselle Sontag—Enthusiasm excited by their joint performance—Greetings of friendship—Madame Malibran's simplicity of taste—Moderation in her personal expenses—Her liberality to her professional colleagues—A touching anecdote—Her talent for representing the burlesque characters of low comedy—Her taste for caricature—Private theatricals in her own house—Attack on Madame Malibran in Galignani's *Messenger*—Gallantry of the Baron de Fremont—Madame Malibran's letter to him.

MADAME MALIBRAN's popularity daily increased. The appearance of Mademoiselle Sontag \* at the Théâtre Italien was a new sti-

\* Now Countess Rossi.

mulus, which contributed, if possible, to improve her talents.

Whenever Sontag obtained a brilliant triumph, Malibran would weep, and exclaim, "Why does she sing so divinely?" The tears excited by these feelings of emulation were the harbingers of renewed exertion and increased improvement.

An earnest desire was felt by many distinguished amateurs to hear these two charming singers together in one opera. But they were mutually fearful of each other, and for some time they cautiously avoided being brought together.

One evening they met at a concert at my house. A little plot was formed against them, and about the middle of the concert it was proposed that they should sing the duo from Tancredi.

For some moments they evidently betrayed fear and hesitation; but at length they consented, and they advanced to the piano amidst the plaudits of the company.

They stood gazing at each other with a look of distrust and confusion; but at length the closing chord of the introduction roused their attention, and the duo commenced.

The applause was rapturous, and was equally divided between the charming singers. They themselves seemed delighted at the effect they had produced, and astonished to discover how groundless had been their mutual fear. They joined hands, and, inclining affectionately towards each other, they interchanged the kiss of friendship with all the ardour and sensibility of youth.

This moving scene will remain indelibly impressed on the memories of all who witnessed it.

Amidst the brilliant existence which she had now entered upon, Maria Malibran preserved all her natural childishness of manner and simplicity of taste.

She was totally ignorant of everything connected with domestic management and the expenditure of money.

She had been so wholly devoted to her professional studies and avocations, that she seemed to be, as it were, excluded from the circle of real life. She had no taste for luxury, and she never indulged in superfluous expenses; but her bounty was ever unsparingly bestowed on those who needed it. If a case of distress amongst her operatic colleagues reached her ears, she would immediately send a sum of money for the relief of the suffering party. But her aid was not confined to pecuniary donations. She would get up a concert for the benefit of the distressed person or family, use her influence to sell tickets, and break with the operatic manager, if he refused her permission to sing. In this manner her talents and her earnings were constantly devoted to purposes which reflect the highest honour on her generous nature.

Towards the close of one of the seasons of the Parisian opera, a young female, one of the chorus-singers, formed an engagement at the

Opera in London. According to the terms of her engagement, she was to commence her duty in London on a certain night; but she found herself unable to quit Paris, for want of money to pay her travelling expenses. As soon as these circumstances reached the ears of Madame Malibran, she immediately offered to sing at the concert which some persons were exerting themselves to get up for the benefit of the poor chorus-singer.

It may readily be conceived that the announcement of Madame Malibran's name in the bills was a powerful attraction; and accordingly the concert-room was crowded to excess.

At the hour fixed for the commencement of the concert Madame Malibran had not arrived, and the fear of a disappointment began to create uneasiness.

When the performances were nearly half over, Madame Malibran presented herself, and stepping up to the young chorus-singer, she said in

a whisper, "I am rather late, my dear, but the audience shall lose nothing, for I will sing all the pieces set down for me. But, as I promised you my services for the whole evening, I intend to keep my word. I have been singing at a concert given by the Duke of Orleans, and his Royal Highness has presented me with three hundred francs. There, take the money, it is yours!"

Nothing gratified Madame Malibran more than to depart from her usual cast of character, the queens and heroines of the serious opera, and to take comic and even burlesque parts. Thus she voluntarily appeared in the second-rate character of Fidalma in the *Matrimonio Segreto*, and I once heard her say that she should like much to take the trivial character of the Duenna in the Barber of Seville, merely for the sake of wearing the comical dress.

There being very few parts of this class which she could with any degree of propriety appear in on the operatic stage, she amused herself by

acting burlesque characters in private theatricals in her own house.

She possessed admirable talent for caricature. In this respect her humour was not inferior to that of Vernet or Madame Vautrin.

All musical amateurs, in the very highest circle of Parisian society, were eager to obtain invitations to Madame Malibran's private theatricals, and every one was delighted with her performance of the burlesque characters of comedy. But amidst the admiration with which she was greeted, both in public and private, she had the mortification to learn that she had been bitterly assailed in an English Journal, (Galignani's Messenger,) and that the attack had been copied into several French papers.

From the fear of being too much influenced either by praise or blame, Madame Malibran made it a rule never to read the criticisms on her performances which appeared in the public journals. She would, therefore, have remained in ignorance of the attack in Galignani's Mes-

senger, had not her attention been called to it by a peculiar circumstance.

Baron de Fremont, who was a great admirer of Madame Malibran's talent, happened to read the article above alluded to, and was highly indignant at its manifest injustice, though he had not been present at the representation to which it referred. It was natural to expect that some one who had witnessed the performance so severely censured would step forward and refute, by his own knowledge of facts, the assertions of Madame Malibran's assailant. But several days elapsed, and no champion declared himself. Baron de Fremont called on Madame Malibran, showed her the article, and *en vrai preur* begged that she would permit him to take up her defence, by addressing a letter to the editor of Galignani's Messenger. Madame Malibran was deeply sensible of this act of kindness. It was the more serviceable to her, inasmuch as the attack was calculated to injure her in the opinion of the English public,

before whom she was engaged to appear a few months subsequently.

The following is a letter which Madame Malibranc addressed to Baron de Fremont, returning thanks for the service he had rendered her.

Paris, —— 1829.

“ SIR,

“ I am deeply sensible of your kind exertions to serve me, and I feel unable to express the fulness of my gratitude. I have been so occupied in studying the part of Tancredi, that I have not been able to snatch a moment to reply to your two kind letters, and to tell you that I had requested one of our good friends to do what you recommended. I believe that everything is now done. It is true that I have expressed to Madame de Orfila my wish to be present at Madame Lebrun’s masked ball; but I cannot take the liberty of soliciting an invita-

tion for my brother, as I have not the honour of being acquainted with M. Lebrun. I therefore thank you for your good intentions, but I do not wish that this ball should afford another pretext for drawing down censure.

“ I beg you will accept every assurance of the grateful sentiments with which I remain, Sir,

“ Your obliged

“ M. MALIBRAN.”

I must needs confess that I always experienced a certain degree of dissatisfaction when I saw Maria Malibran assume the representation of grotesque characters. I could not endure to see her distort and disfigure that beautiful countenance, which was so well fitted to reflect the noblest sentiments of the soul.

But this extraordinary woman, like all persons of superior genius, was actuated by an uncontrollable desire to exercise all the various talents

with which she was so liberally gifted. She was not prompted by vanity, but by the force of her own genius.

## CHAPTER XI.

Madame Malibran's benefit—Wreaths and bouquets thrown on the stage—Madame Malibran's passion for flowers—A anecdote of her dying scene in *Otello*—Her visit to the Château de Brizay—The Countess de Sparre—Madame Malibran's rural rambles—Dangers to which she exposed herself—Assumes male attire and other disguises—Dr. D— and the peasant girl—Hoax performed by Madame Malibran—Trait of delicate generosity—Inscription recording Madame Malibran's bounty.

MADAME MALIBRAN took her benefit on the 31st of March. The performance was *Otello*. Public enthusiasm was at its height.

On this occasion wreaths and bouquets of flowers were for the first time thrown on the stage of the Italian Opera at Paris.

Madame Malibran therefore received the first offerings of this delightful homage, so appropriate to female taste, and so well calculated to make an impression on the female heart.

Maria Malibran's nervous temperament and romantic turn of feeling inspired her with a passionate love of flowers. During her performance of Desdemona, on the evening of her benefit above alluded to, she betrayed her fondness for flowers in a singular way. When Desdemona lay dead on the stage, and the Moor in his frenzied grief was preparing to inflict upon himself the blow which was to lay him prostrate at her side, Madame Malibran, fearing the destruction of the bouquets and wreaths which lay scattered round her, exclaimed in a low tone of voice, "Take care of my flowers ! Do not crush my flowers !"

As a relaxation from the fatigues of her professional exertions, she set off, at the end of June, to pass a few weeks at the Château de

Brizay, the residence of the Countess de Sparre.\* That amiable lady, whose talents entitle her to hold the first rank among musicians, as her virtues befit her to occupy the highest station in society, cherished a cordial and sincere friendship for Maria Malibran.

When in the country, our *prima donna*, forgetting the crown of Semiramis and the harp of Desdemona, used sometimes to sally forth on her rural rambles disguised in the garb of a young student. Dressed in a short blouse, a silk handkerchief tied negligently round her neck, and a light *casquette* on her head, she naturally found herself more safe and under less restraint than she could have been in female habiliments.

She would rise at six in the morning, and go out, sometimes taking a fowling-piece, to enjoy the sport of shooting. At other times she would go out on horseback, always selecting the most spirited horse she could find. After

\* The daughter of Naldi, the celebrated *buffo* singer.

galloping over hill and dale, at the risk of breaking her neck, fording rivers, and exposing herself to every danger, she would return and quell the apprehensions of her friends, who were often painfully alarmed for her safety. During the remainder of the day she would amuse herself with all sorts of childish games and exercises.

Among the visitors at the Château de Brizay, was Dr. D —, an old friend of the Countess de Sparre. The doctor was a remarkably kind-hearted and charitable man, and the gravity of his manners formed an amusing contrast to the gaiety of Madame Malibran.

She one day took it into her head to disguise herself as a peasant girl. Her costume was perfect; the pointed cap with long *barbes*, the gold cross, the shoe-buckles, — nothing was wanting.

She coloured her skin so as to give the semblance of a swarthy sunburnt complexion, and stuffed out her cheeks with cotton, to

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impart an appearance of plumpness to her face. Thus disguised, she one day presented herself to the doctor, and addressing him in the *patois* of the province, which she could mimic in perfection, told him a piteous tale of misfortune. Her mother was ill, and had broken her arm, &c. "I have heard, sir, that you are a very clever doctor, and I hope you will give me something to cure my poor mother. I assure you we are in miserable poverty!"

Dr. D. prescribed some remedies, gave her a little money, and Madame Malibran took her leave.

In the evening, when the doctor related to the company the visit he had received, Madame Malibran affected to listen with great interest to his story, and expressed regret that she had not seen the peasant girl.

The hoax was several times repeated, and at length the pretended peasant girl gave the old doctor to understand that she was deeply smitten with him. The doctor and the other

visitors at the château were highly amused at this strange infatuation of the peasant girl. Madame Malibran constantly expressed regret that she could not get sight of the fair *inamorata*, always accounting for her absence by a headache, or a visit to some poor family in the village.

One day, the pretended peasant, emboldened by the success of her hoax, took the doctor's arm, and walked round the garden in conversation with him. The poor doctor did not attempt to withdraw his arm. He quietly resigned himself to his fate; but turning to the persons who accompanied him, he said, "What a flattering conquest I have made!"

No sooner had he uttered these words, than a smart *soufflet* convinced him of the propriety of being gallant, even to a peasant girl.

"And when did you ever make a better, you ungrateful man?" exclaimed Madame Malibran in her natural tone of voice, which she had hitherto disguised by means of the stuffing she had put into her mouth.

Poor Dr. D. stood bewildered with astonishment, whilst all present joined in a roar of laughter, at the same time complimenting Madame Malibran on the perfection of her disguise.

But these playful sallies did not divert Madame Malibran's thoughts from the exercise of that generosity which was inherent in her nature. Some days after the scene above described, she observed that Dr. D. appeared low-spirited and abstracted. She questioned him on the subject of his unusual dulness, but could gain no satisfactory answer. She soon, however, learned that a sister of the doctor, who had suffered several sad reverses of fortune, now found herself completely ruined by a fire, which had destroyed her house, and with it all the property she possessed.

This disaster not only obliged Dr. D. to transmit pecuniary aid to his sister, but also to make a journey into the south of France, to assist her by his advice. As his own fortune

was very limited, he found it no easy task to accomplish these duties.

Madame Malibran immediately despatched letters, directing that the house should be rebuilt at her expense.

This act of generous bounty was executed with such promptitude and secrecy, that, just at the moment when Dr. D. was about to start on his journey to the south, he received a letter from the mayor of the village in which his sister resided. This letter acknowledged the receipt of the sum *sent by him*, assuring him that it should be applied according to his directions, &c. The fact was, that Madame Malibran had sent the requisite instructions to the mayor for rebuilding the house ; and she had so fully anticipated every want of the suffering family, as to render Dr. D.'s journey unnecessary.

During the life of Madame Malibran, neither Dr. D. nor his sister knew who was their benefactor ; but, after her decease, some me-

moranda found among her papers disclosed the secret. A stone is now fixed on the front of the house, bearing the following inscription :

REBATIE  
PAR LES POINS BIENFAISANTS  
DE MADAME MALIBRAN.

This act of generosity is the more worthy of admiration, inasmuch as, at the time of its performance, Madame Malibran had scarcely commenced her theatrical career, and a great portion of the emoluments arising from her exertions was despatched to her husband in America.

## CHAPTER XII.

Madame Malibran returns to Paris—Terms of her engagement at the Théâtre Italien—The operatic company—Madame Malibran's appearance in *Matilda di Sabrano*, the *Gazza Ladra*, and the *Cenerentola*—The prison duet in the *Gazza Ladra*—Halevy's opera of *Clary*—Madame Malibran's impressive performance of the character of the heroine—She sets off for London, accompanied by Madame Naldi—Her engagement at the King's Theatre—Her terms for singing at private parties—Charitable act—Madame Malibran engaged to sing at Bath and Bristol—She proceeds to Brussels.

AFTER a visit of three months at the Château de Brizay, Madame Malibran returned to Paris, where the operatic season was about to commence.

She concluded an engagement with M. Laurent, the manager of the Théâtre Italien, on the same terms as those of the preceding year;

viz. eight hundred francs for each night of performance, and a free benefit.

The principal members of the operatic company were—Madame Malibran, Mademoiselle Sontag, Donzelli, Zuccheli, and Graziani. Madame Malibran appeared in *Otello*, and was greeted with all the enthusiasm which her performances of the preceding season had elicited.

On the 13th of October she appeared in the new character of *Matilda di Sabrano*. She sang and acted with her usual excellence; but the music of the part being better adapted to the high and flexible tones of a soprano voice, was therefore better suited to the powers of Mademoiselle Sontag, to whom Madame Malibran shortly after surrendered the part.

In the *Cenerentola*, and the *Gazza Ladra*, Madame Malibran appeared with prodigious success. She was charming in the homely costume of *Cenerentola*, and she acted the part with the most captivating simplicity and *naïveté*.

The victim-like resignation which she main-

tained in the presence of her father, suddenly changed when she was left alone with her sisters. She then assumed a haughty and pouting manner, which imparted an air of novelty to the character.

The splendid finale, "Non piu mesta," was admirably adapted to Malibran's powers, as was likewise the *cantabile* in the finale to the first act. The vast extent of notes embraced in these two compositions enabled Madame, Malibran to display the full resources of her voice and style, and she astonished all who heard her by the original and happy flights of her fancy.

Madame Malibran was the first singer who revealed the beauty of the prison duo in the opera of the *Gazza Ladra*. Previously to her performance of *Ninetta*, that composition had been listened to with indifference, and indeed it had been often entirely omitted, as though it were a production of inferior merit.

How unfortunate it would be for musical

composers, if they did not sometimes find singers capable of understanding and imparting a due expression to their conceptions !

The duo above mentioned, which had been neglected because it was not understood, obtained the greatest popularity after it had been sung by Madame Malibran. She gave the *andante* with an expression of prophetic and touching melancholy, and then dashed boldly into the *allegro*, defying, as it were, the power of fate. Her rapid transitions from the lower to the upper tones of her voice excited at once wonder and delight.

The whole history of poor Ninetta appeared to be summed up in this duo, when sung with the powerful expression which Madame Malibran imparted to it. The life of girlish innocence and joy chequered by gloomy forebodings, the torments of unjust persecution, the fury of despair, the resignation of innocence—all were admirably and vividly portrayed.

I never witnessed the performance of the

drama here alluded to—not even in the operatic form, in which the music tends to soften down its vivid colouring—without being forcibly impressed with the natural truth of the subject, and the example it affords of human injustice.

On the 9th of December Madame Malibran appeared in the opera of Clary, which M. Halevy composed expressly for her. The performance was crowned with brilliant success. The opera contained a great deal of beautiful music.

Nothing could be finer than Madame Malibran's acting in the scene in which Clary first appears, magnificently dressed, and surrounded by all the allurements which love and wealth can bestow. When she expressed her remorse and regret, and when memory reverted to the days of her childhood and her father's cottage, tears of penitence seemed to roll down her cheeks.

In this scene the thrilling tones of Malibran's voice vibrated through the hearts of her auditors. The impressive effect of her performance

will never be erased from the memory of those who witnessed it.

Then, again, how admirably she acted the scene in which she discovered her lover's treachery, when he frankly avows that he never had the intention of making her his wife ! What noble pride was expressed in her accents ! how truly dignified she seemed, even in the depths of her wretchedness !

Maria Malibran affords one of the few examples of the capability of producing ineffaceable impressions in an art whose effects are in their very nature fugitive. She was one of the gifted few whom Nature endows with the union of those rare qualities which serve to reveal all the power of the histrionic art.

All who have seen Madame Malibran in the character of Clary must have been struck with her exquisite acting in the scene in which, having resumed the humble garb of a village girl, she prepares to depart, renouncing her fatal illusions and vain hopes. She opens the

window to effect her escape: a ray of moonlight falls full on the portrait of her lover, and she pauses to gaze on it. It would be vain to attempt to describe the admirable expression of her countenance and attitude, or the thrilling accents of her voice, whilst she took a last farewell of the picture.

It is to be regretted that the opera of Clary has not been more frequently performed; though, after Malibran, it would have been difficult for any other to undertake the part. The opera was highly creditable to the talent of its composer.

On the 2nd of April, 1829, after the close of the Théâtre Italien, Madame Malibran left Paris for London, accompanied by Madame Naldi. She was engaged by Laporte to sing at the King's Theatre, the terms of her engagement being seventy-five guineas per night, and a benefit. In London she was greeted with the echo of the applause she had so deservedly earned in Paris. She performed in Otello.

Semiramide, the Gazza Ladra, the Capuleti, and the Cenerentola.

But the happiness of thus finding herself the object of public admiration was not without its antidote. She experienced some little annoyances in her intercourse with private society. It was thought, I know not why, that her demand of twenty-five guineas for singing at a private party was exorbitant. That sum had, however, been readily granted to Pasta; and as Madame Malibran considered that it would be doing herself injustice to lower her demand, a little unpleasantness of feeling ensued, and she sang but seldom in private circles.

This sort of exile annoyed her, not from any considerations of pecuniary interest, but because she attached great importance to the advantage of mingling in the higher circles of society. Nevertheless, she was received with the most gratifying cordiality in the houses of several members of the English aristocracy; and in

London, as in Paris, she formed many real friends in the most exalted rank of life.

On the eve of Madame Malibran's departure from London, she performed an act of charity which well deserves to be recorded. On her return home from the opera, her ears still ringing with the plaudits which her performance had elicited, she beheld, on alighting from her carriage, a poor woman, with two little children, sitting on the steps of the door, and imploring charity.

The night was cold and rainy. Madame Malibran instantly ordered that the poor woman and her children should be admitted to the house, and that they should be warmed and fed. She collected some articles of clothing for the children, and putting five guineas into the hand of the mother, she said, "Take this, my good woman, and pray for me."

Madame Malibran was engaged to sing in eight concerts at Bath and Bristol, for the sum of seventy guineas each performance. These

concerts were not, however, to commence until the end of September, or the beginning of October; and Madame Malibran accordingly availed herself of the respite thus afforded her to pay a visit to Brussels, where she was impatiently expected. In that city she sang at several concerts, and was received with increased favour.

## CHAPTER XIII.

M. de Beriot—His disappointed love—Interest felt for him by Madame Malibran—She becomes attached to him—Remonstrances of Madame Naldi—Madame Malibran hires a house in Paris—Extraordinary combination of talent at the Italian Opera in Paris—Madame Pizzaroni—Her unfortunate personal appearance—Her manner of singing—Grimaces—Style of Madame Pasta—Joint performance of Mesdames Sontag and Malibran—De Beriot returns to Paris—Madame Malibran's reception of him—Her fear of public opinion—Sources of annoyance and mortification—Malibran's eccentric and capricious feeling.

HERETOFORE Madame Malibran's whole soul had been absorbed by the love of her art, and to excel in it appeared to be the sole object of her thoughts and wishes. Her character was

pure, and her conduct had been marked by the most scrupulous propriety. But, at the period to which I am now about to advert, her heart became susceptible to that passion which, in a nature like hers, could not fail to determine the fate of her after life.

The object of her attachment was a young artist, whose talents, even then, entitled him to rank among the first musicians of the day. Maria Malibran's choice was therefore perfectly congenial with her position as well as with her taste; and, amidst the seductions to which she was exposed, that choice proves the pure and elevated feelings by which her inclinations were guided.

One day a friend was rallying her on the ardent passion with which she had inspired one of her admirers. "Why, I confess," she replied, with an air of simple earnestness, "that I do believe he loves me, but what of that? I do not love him. I do not wish to set myself up as a heroine of virtue. I know the dangers

to which I am exposed. I am young, untrammelled by pecuniary dependence, married to a man old enough to be my grandfather; my husband two thousand leagues apart from me, and I exposed to every temptation—the probability is, that I shall fall in love some day or another. But rest assured that whenever I do, I will not play the coquette. When I meet with the man capable of winning my heart, I will honestly tell him that I love him, and my affection will never change.

She kept her word.

M. de Beriot, the distinguished violinist, had left Belgium, his native country, to pass the winter in Paris. During that season Madame Malibran and De Beriot met several times at concerts and musical parties, and their united talents were the theme of admiration.

Madame Malibran, though she knew but little of the young violinist, felt a deep interest for him. This interest was excited not merely by his talent, which she admired with all the

enthusiasm natural to her ardent feeling; but she knew that he was unfortunate, and that was a powerful claim on her sympathy

De Beriot had conceived an attachment for Mademoiselle S—, but his passion was not returned, the lady's affections being engaged to the individual who afterwards became her husband.

Pity is nearly allied to love in the heart of a woman of ardent and romantic feeling; and whilst Madame Malibran pitied De Beriot, she loved him without being conscious of it. They separated at the close of the spring, but they met again at Brussels.

One evening they were at the Château de Chimay, De Beriot played a concerto which enchanted all who heard him. At its conclusion Madame Malibran stepped up to him, and taking his hand in hers, in a faltering voice expressed her admiration of his performance. Her eyes were overflowing with tears, and she was agitated by the most powerful emotions. Whilst endeavouring to disguise her embarrass-

ment, by giving utterance to a string of compliments and congratulations, some words escaped her which sufficiently denoted her real sentiments.

From that moment the hearts of these two young artists were linked together in the purest mutual affection.

Madame Malibran returned to England to fulfil her professional engagements.

She soon began to feel annoyed by the restraint imposed on her by Madame Naldi, and she no longer made that lady the confidante of her correspondence.

Madame Naldi suspected Madame Malibran's attachment for De Beriot, and she decidedly disapproved it. Maria listened to her remonstrance and advice with apparent deference, but she was in reality deeply mortified, and from that moment she resolved to take the first opportunity of emancipating herself from a restraint to which but a short time previously she voluntarily subjected herself.

Madame Malibran landed at Calais on the 26th of October, and reached Paris on the 28th. She took up her residence in a small house, which, through the medium of a friend, she had engaged in the Rue de Provence. Although her circumstances and position were unchanged, yet she seemed at this time to attach particular importance to the fact of residing in a house of her own. It is possible that vague thoughts, which perhaps she dared not avow even to herself, rendered her sensible to the value of entire independence.

The season of the Italian Opera commenced in Paris with more than usual brilliancy. To the united talents of Mesdames Malibran and Sontag were added those of Madame Pizzaroni. It is impossible to conceive the effect produced by the combined performances of these three extraordinary singers.

The success of Madame Pizzaroni, in spite of the unfavourable impression produced by her personal appearance, reflects equal honour on

her talents and the good sense of the public. The merit of her singing gained the suffrage even of those who had at first been prejudiced by her total deficiency of beauty. Her singing may be ranked among the greatest triumphs of the vocal air.

Her contralto voice, though possessing great compass, was very unequal in its quality. In singing upon some of her middle notes, she was unfortunately obliged to twist her mouth in such a manner that the tone thus produced had a very peculiar and strange effect.

Notwithstanding the general purity and beauty of Pizzaroni's style, some connoisseurs are of opinion that the peculiar twist of the mouth above mentioned was merely the result of an unfortunate habit. But I doubt this. It always appeared to me that the distortion was an unavoidable necessity, and that the notes in question could not have been sung without it.

The best singers have two different methods of forming their tones: first, by a strict

adherence to the rules of art; and secondly, by modifying those rules according to the peculiar nature of the voice. Art will enable a singer to turn even natural imperfections to advantage;\* and there are defects of voice which can be modified only by deviating from the rules of art. There are many examples of great singers who, after strictly adhering for a series of years to the principles of art, contract a faulty and at length a bad style; because, their voices having changed, they are obliged to sing as *they can*, and not as *they would*.

Maria Malibran made her re-appearance at

\* That depth of expression which is one of the principal charms of Madame Pasta's singing, is in a great degree due to the irregularity of the tones of her voice. Her lower tones, which are somewhat harsh and husky, are admirably fitted for the expression of vehement passion, and are the more effective owing to the beautiful and unexpected contrast presented by the sweetness of the upper tones. We are frequently impressed with a profound sensation of melancholy by the sort of guttural tone produced by some singers in the sudden transition from the *voce di petto* to the *voce di testa*.

the Théâtre Italien in her favourite character of Desdemona. Otello was speedily followed by Tancredi, and by Zingarelli's Romeo and Giulietta.

In the two last-mentioned operas Madame Malibran was powerfully seconded by the talents of the charming Mademoiselle Sontag, who performed the character of Amenaide in Tancredi, and that of Giulietta in Zingarelli's opera.

Madame Malibran had now become the idol of all frequenters of the opera. With her admirable singing she combined the talent of a great tragedian. Her acting was never studied—it was the result of her own inspirations; and if the ardour of those inspirations occasionally carried her beyond the limits of the circle prescribed by conventional custom, it cannot be denied that she often reached the sublime.

She never took lessons either in action or declamation. She was the pupil of nature;

and being endowed with an exquisite perception of the natural and the beautiful, she could, without the aid of art, produce the most powerful effects. Her acting always came home to the hearts of her auditors.

Professional advantage, seconded by the dictates of a more powerful interest, induced De Beriot to revisit Paris. Madame Malibran was overjoyed to see him. She received him with tenderness mixed with reserve, for she stood in great fear of public opinion. She already felt grievously annoyed by the conviction, that if she was received in society, it was only on account of her talent.

Being naturally proud, and feeling a proper consciousness of her own merit, she was painfully mortified to observe that, in reference to herself, a line of demarcation was drawn between rank and talent—between the equality imposed by friendship, and the mere interest accorded by patronage. How often would a cold look

or a haughty gesture inflict a deep wound on her sensitive heart, and rouse her from her dream of triumph !

Her life was made up of a series of contrasts. On the one hand she beheld a throng of admirers, who, enchanted by her powerful talent, offered to her the incense of adoration. But that brow which could so nobly bear a crown, shrank blushingly beneath the cold aristocratic salute. On returning home from a party, she has been known to burst into tears, exclaiming, “ I am merely the opera singer—nothing more —the slave whom they pay to minister to their pleasure ! ”

From this it might naturally be presumed that Malibran would have felt gratified when a lady of high rank invited her to a party, and from motives of delicacy cautiously refrained from requesting her to sing. But no such thing ! Such was her strange eccentricity of character, that though overwhelmed with attentions, she returned home ill-humoured and

dissatisfied, and satirically expressed her acknowledgments for the generous and disinterested politeness of which she had been the object. It was easy to perceive that, of all mortifications, that which she most dreaded was to be deprived of her crown of professional glory.

## CHAPTER XIV.

Proposed trip to St. Petersburg—Madame Malibran's disapproval of the scheme—Coldness between her and De Beriot—Elegant present sent by De Beriot to Madame Malibran—She learns to play the harp—Her extraordinary power of memory—Facility of learning her parts—Her capability of singing at sight—Chevalier Neukomm's mass—The language of signs—The deaf and dumb youth—Madame Malibran's conversation with him—Her riding and dancing—Singers usually indifferent dancers.

DE BERIOT returned to Paris, attracted partly by professional motives, but still more by the presence of her whose affections he possessed. Malibran, however, who was fully conscious of the value of a reputation in a public character, carefully concealed their *liaison*. One day De

Beriot informed her that he had made a most brilliant engagement to perform in Russia, and begged of her to accompany him, representing the advantage that would accrue from the union of their talents. But Madame Malibran's delicacy took the alarm. She rejected the proposition, pointing out how much her reputation would be compromised by such a step, and she reproached De Beriot for not having been himself the first to take that point into consideration. Some high words ensued between them, and for several days they met as strangers.

This state of things, however, did not last long ; an explanation took place, and they became better friends than ever. Madame Malibran expressed a desire to learn the harp, and on the following morning De Beriot sent her a splendid one.

Touched by this mark of his attention, she studied the instrument, and in a very short time was enabled to accompany herself in

Desdemona's romance. She was afterwards induced to give it up, mainly through fear that it might injure her voice.

Madame Malibran had a most extraordinary power of memory. I have known her study an opera in the morning, and play in it the same evening. She had only to try over the music once, and she knew it perfectly.

One day when we were visiting Chevalier Neukomm, Maria took up a mass of his composition which was lying on the table. She sang it throughout, and accompanied herself without making a single mistake, although it was in manuscript and exceedingly difficult.

I saw her in the space of half an hour learn the language of signs—that is to say, the mode by which deaf and dumb persons communicate.

One day a friend called upon her, accompanied by a deaf and dumb youth. Madame Malibran was not aware of his infirmity, but the melancholy expression of his countenance

excited her interest. Her friend acquainted her with the cause. She had never before seen a deaf and dumb person, and she had no idea of the language of signs.

She was deeply moved by the condition of the poor lad, and with tears in her eyes she drew her chair near to him. She endeavoured to express herself to him by signs. He answered her in the same manner. She observed and endeavoured to imitate him, and succeeded so well that at the expiration of half an hour she understood all the rules of the language, and could carry on a fluent conversation in it.

Madame Malibran was fond of all active exercises. She was an excellent horsewoman, but an indifferent dancer. Singers in general evince but little talent for dancing, and, what is still more singular, they frequently keep very bad time. Another curious fact is, that musicians are rarely sensible to the charms of poetry. *monosyllabic*

How are these anomalies to be accounted

for? The idea that naturally suggests itself is, that the vast developement of one sense absorbs the power of the rest. But if it be true that dancing and music, as well as music and poetry, are like plants of one family, and may flourish on the same stem, it is not very easy to account for the extraordinary phenomenon.

## CHAPTER XV.

M. Malibran arrives from America—His base deception previous to his marriage—He agrees to live apart from his wife—Madame Malibran's wish to obtain a divorce—She writes to General Lafayette—The General's last love—Madame Malibran's taste for charades and riddles—M. Viardot—An anecdote—Madame Malibran's musical compositions.

MEANWHILE M. Malibran came unexpectedly from America. His wife, who had hitherto aided him by her exertions, heard of his arrival with dismay. It was quite impossible she could respect him; the manner in which all his promises, both to herself and her father, had been broken, banished any esteem she might perhaps have felt for him.

He had agreed to give 100,000 francs (£4,000) to Garcia, as a compensation for the loss of his daughter's services: he had pledged himself instantly to withdraw his wife from a fatiguing and irksome profession, and to secure to her a respectable independence for life. Neither of these promises was fulfilled, nor could he have ever intended to fulfil them, for when he made them, he must have been conscious he was on the eve of immediate bankruptcy.

The breach of the first pledge caused Maria's friends to abandon her. The violation of the second promise compelled her not only to return to her profession for her own maintenance, but also for that of her husband, who, foreseeing the coming storm, had by a base deception secured himself against want.

This man's arrival in Europe was the first serious shock Maria Malibran suffered; she saw at a glance the horror of her early marriage. M. Malibran had now come to assert his rights, and to share the fruit of his wife's

exertions. The form which appeared as a shadow on the other side of the Atlantic became substance, and the pensioner suddenly announced his arrival in the character of her lord and master. However, by the mediation of mutual friends, and the payment of a considerable sum, he consented to live apart from her. But she naturally felt that he might, whenever he pleased, violate this agreement; a moment's change of humour, a sudden thought, and he possessed the legal right to insist on sharing her home. This dreaded doom kept her in a state of continual agitation.

One night, while lying on her sleepless couch, a sudden thought struck her. In the morning she communicated it to a legal gentleman of considerable talent; but the marriage having been celebrated in New York, it was necessary to write for information to America, and no further steps could be taken for several months.

In the expectation that legal proceedings

would be instituted in America, Madame Malibrān wrote to Lafayette, requesting him to use his interest in her behalf, and lend his powerful aid in assisting her. This she need scarcely have asked, since the veteran patriot regarded her with the affection of a father, bestowing on her that admiration which he was ever ready to accord to talent. Often would he laughingly say, "Maria Garcia is my last love; I don't .

\* think any one will supplant her."

Madame Malibrān, about this time, made the acquaintance, or, perhaps I should more properly say, gained the friendship, of M. Viardot in rather an extraordinary manner. As that friendship formed a feature in her after life, I may relate the anecdote here. Madame Malibrān was remarkably fond of riddles and charades, and delighted in puzzling people to guess them. One evening she was repeating a number of ingenious riddles at a soirée given by M. —. All were laughing, guessing, and applauding her to the skies, when she perceived

M. Viardot quietly seated in a corner of the room, apparently taking no interest in that which amused the rest of the company. This piqued her. It is true, M. Viardot was almost a stranger; but then, again, no pretty woman likes to be neglected, even by one out of a thousand. Maria again uttered another sally of wit, but in vain she looked for a smile from the sedate gentleman in the corner. Determined no longer to bear this, she rose after her next charade, and approaching him, asked in a low voice, "Give me your opinion of my last."

"It was not good," gravely replied M. Viardot, "because——;" and here he entered into his reasons for condemning it.

She listened to him attentively, and when he had done speaking, she could not help remarking on the singularity of his disapproval, since every one else applauded her.

"True," rejoined Viardot, "they seek to please you by flattery. But I really esteem

you; therefore prefer telling you the truth, even at the risk of displeasing you."

For an instant she looked attentively at him; then holding out her hand, she grasped his, saying, "At length I have found sincerity. Grant me your friendship—mine is yours for life."

I cannot refrain from relating another circumstance which occurred on the same evening. Madame Malibran, as I believe every one is aware, had a remarkable talent for musical composition. This talent, however, she exercised only for amusement, giving to her friends, or to charities, the pieces she composed. On this occasion Madame de —— was present: a lady for whom our fair cantatrice had the greatest respect, but whose pecuniary circumstances were deplorably reduced. Willingly would Maria Malibran have assisted her, but the pride of Madame —— precluded the possibility of a pecuniary offer; she, therefore, resorted to an ingenious little artifice to effect her generous

purpose. Madame ——'s son, a lad of sixteen, was present.

“ I understand that this young gentleman has a great talent for poetry,” said Madame Malibran to the mother. “ I am going to propose a little speculation between us. Having written six airs for publication, I want words for them: will you undertake to furnish them, and we will divide the profits ?”

The proposal was instantly accepted; the young poet produced the verses, and they were sent to Madame Malibran. The songs were never published; but Madame de —— received six hundred francs as her son's share of the profit arising from them.

In the month of February De Beriot started for Brussels, from whence, a few weeks afterwards, he wrote to Madame Malibran, through his sister, offering her a most advantageous engagement in Holland. Her pride again took the alarm, and for the second time this extraordinary pair quarrelled.

## CHAPTER XVI.

Madame Malibran revisits England—Madame Lalande—Professional jealousy among public performers—Madame Malibran's description of the débüt of Madame Lalande—Il Pirato—Donzelli's bows—Personal appearance of Madame Lalande—Her tremulous tones—Madame Malibran's style of writing—Correspondence—Laporte's embarrassments—Madame Malibran's first performance at the King's Theatre in the season of 1830—Her own account of her success—Her anxiety to obtain a divorce—Lady Flint—Sir George Warrender—Incongruities in the disposition and feelings of Madame Malibran.

THE London season again brought Maria back to England.

Several of her friends advised her to relinquish her London engagement; and it already began to be whispered that Laporte was in an

insolvent state. But the chance of terms such as she had before obtained was too tempting to be rejected ; so, at all hazards, she determined to keep her engagement. On her arrival she found that Madame Lalande was the prima donna whom she herself was to succeed. This lady had become a considerable favourite in England, which annoyed Madame Malibran not a little. Jealousy is a feeling which, in a greater or a lesser degree, pervades public performers ; nor do I believe any actor or actress is capable of fairly judging of the merits of another. Notwithstanding her naturally good disposition, Madame Malibran could never endure a rival ; but her feelings on this subject are best described in her own language, contained in a letter addressed by her at this period to an intimate friend.

“ MY DEAREST AND BEST FRIEND,  
“ I determined not to trouble you till I should have something worth writing about, but I

cannot now help breaking the ice. Though I have no particular subject to treat on, yet I feel sure you will be delighted to see my scribble ; for I judge from myself, and I know I should be delighted to see yours. I fancy I see you reading these lines, and striking your forehead, whilst you exclaim, ‘ What strange creatures women are !’ They are indeed—I confess it. What can I say more ?

“ Let me see if I can think of some little bit of news—I have it : I will give you an account of the *débüt* of Madame Lalande.

“ I went to the opera with Lady Flint, her husband, and her daughter ; and having taken my seat and adjusted my *lorgnette*, I impatiently awaited the entrance of the Pirato, who was to be represented by Donzelli.

“ The overture commenced. Humph ! very so so. It is not effective. The curtain rose. The opening scene was pretty, and was loudly applauded. Dramatic authors and composers know how much they owe to the scene-painter.

“Enter Il Pirato. He blustered, and strutted about, sang loudly, enchanted the audience, and was clapped. In acknowledgment of the applause, Donzelli bowed at least thirty times, and continued bowing until he was actually behind the side-scenes.

“The first air was tolerable.

“Change of scene.

“Venga la bella Italiana,\* said I to my little self. I was all impatience, and as she appeared I stretched over the box to catch a glimpse of her. Alas! what a disappointment! Picture to yourself a woman of about forty, with light hair and a vulgar broad face, with an unfavourable expression, a bad figure, as clumsy a foot as my own, and most unbecomingly dressed.

“The recitative commenced. Her voice trembled so, that none could find out whether it was sweet or harsh. I therefore waited patiently

\* This is meant as a little bit of malice; the fact being, that Madame Lalande was neither handsome nor an Italian.

for the cavatina. It commenced, and the prima donna opened her mouth with a long tremulous note.

“Concluding that this arose from timidity, I could not help pitying her. But, alas! the undulating tones of her voice continued throughout, and utterly spoiled the pretty cavatina. At its conclusion she was vociferously applauded, and made a thousand curtsies, which is the custom in London. Next came the beautiful duet. In this she was just as cold and tremulous as before. In a word, not to weary you with a long account of each morceau, she finished her part in the same bad style in which she began it.

“She had to sing a very fine air just before the conclusion, where her husband and her lover had been killed. She advanced to the front of the stage, leading in her hand a little child, who would very much have preferred going to sleep to being thus dragged on the stage to hear a lachrymose chant. Madame Lalande

sang it without spirit, and consequently produced no effect. Notwithstanding this, she was called for after the fall of the curtain, and received great applause. Yet the general opinion is, that she was very mediocre. '*Or vien il meglio,*' as Susanne says: I have discovered that this tremulous style is Madame Lalande's constant manner of singing. It is her fashion—immovable, fixed, eternal! You may therefore guess how well our voices are likely to blend together—two and two, like *three goats*. Her middle notes are wiry, and have a harsh and shrill effect. The opera contains some good music, but it is decidedly feeble. There is a splendid trio sung by the lover, the husband, and the wife. The latter is so constant and faithful to the Pirate, that when the lover and the husband throw themselves together at her feet, she sternly refuses to follow her consort. Another person would, perhaps, have described this scene more intelligibly, which, by-the-bye, is very much like that

between Otello, Iago, and Desdemona. But I, who know to whom I am writing, feel convinced you will understand me. I shall therefore take no pains to clear up the mystery which always pervades my explanations.\*

“ The proverb says truly, ‘ Amongst wolves one learns to howl.’ I perceive I can neither utter a single sentence, nor write a single line, without introducing some parenthesis. How pleasant it is, when really interested in a subject, to have to wade zig-zag through a thou-

\* Madame Malibran, in her letters, frequently expressed herself with so much vagueness, that it is not always easy to understand her allusions. There often appears to be a private understanding between herself and the person she addresses, which renders the correspondence unintelligible to those who do not possess the key to the subject referred to. Some of her letters appear nonsensical and mysterious to the uninitiated reader. I have, however, transcribed them word for word, considering such to be my duty as a faithful biographer, and believing the reader would rather peruse the genuine effusions of her eccentric mind than any garbled explanations, which after all might be erroneous.

sand interruptions before you arrive at the point you wish to come to. You understand what I mean. It is a hint I give you *en passant*, and one which I trust you will attend to when you write me those letters I so anxiously look for, telling me all about your health, your plans," &c.

I may here transcribe a few letters from Madame Malibran, written about the same period as the above.

" 29th April, 1830.

" I am to appear immediately, because Laporte is rather in a difficult position just now. He is losing nightly. Madame Lalande has done him harm, and he expects me to come and drag him out of his trouble.

" You know that the chimney-sweepers dance about the streets of London on the first of May, dressed out in tinsel and flowers, with their cheeks bedaubed with paint. Luckily I do not

make my *debut* on that day. Comparisons might be drawn ; but no doubt I shall have to endure comparisons no less complimentary.

“ My fears have such an effect upon me, that I am downright ill ; but enough of this subject.

“ I am going to breakfast. To-night, after the opera, I'll again write, and tell you my fate.”

“ 30th April, 1830.

“ I made my first appearance last night in the Cenerentola. My *debut* was what is called here a most successful one, though, if I had had the same reception in Paris, I should have reckoned it half a failure. However, I was called for at the conclusion of the opera, and was applauded from the boxes as well as the pit.

“ My voice is said to have improved since last year, as well as my figure, which is much admired. Don't imagine that I am vain of that,

but I am determined to tell you all. I am also considered very gracious for consenting to make my first appearance on Thursday, an evening generally considered unfashionable. But, as my name drew a full audience, I was well pleased, since it secures me in favour for the rest of the season. I saw, when I was on the stage, my friend *Louchard*; I nodded to him in such a way as to show that I did not wish to take any further notice of him. To-morrow I repeat the same character, and I have no doubt I shall do it better. This evening I sing at a concert for the benefit of 'decayed musicians.'

"Need I again assure you that you are everything to me? You know it well. To you I owe my present happiness, as well as that which I enjoyed in Paris. I still wear the ring you gave me—perfect emblem of our friendship—a knot which, the more you try to undo it, becomes the tighter. Is it not a perfect image of true affection, of pure and long-enduring friendship? Yes! the more I think on it, the more certain

do I feel that friendship is eternal, enduring through ages to come, consoling us even after death. This reflection makes me long for eternity, and yet I feel there are also miseries which will live for ever.

“ I have written to Viardot, and he has done all he could to comfort me in my distress. I have also told my unhappy story to Lady Flint;\* she has mentioned it to one of her friends, who informs her he was himself extricated from a similar misfortune by an old nobleman, (above seventy years of age,) who knows the laws of almost every country by heart. This morning Sir George Warrender, who is the *old friend* of the still *older nobleman*, is coming to see me at twelve to talk it over. As I hazard nothing in doing so, I shall let him know as much as may suit my views, (*and not one word more*,) in order to get his advice upon the subject, and thus relieve my oppressed heart.

\* She here evidently alludes to her divorce.

“ If you were near me, and I could talk to you, I should seek no other consolation. But, my friend, I beseech you do not suddenly surprise me; when the happy day for our meeting is fixed, let me know it. Give me a little time to prepare for the happy event, and by anticipation enjoy my coming happiness. Yes, you are the source of my every delight; you alone can make the drooping plant once more raise its head. There is one flower, heart’s-ease, which must be ever with you, because you are all goodness—because you delight in consoling the afflicted—because you counsel as a father—like a brother—because—because—but stay—I should never have done with my *becauses*, were I to enumerate all your merits.

“ Adieu—I must go and dress to receive *the old friend of the old friend*, and after that I must attend rehearsal.

“ Adieu—father, mother, brother, and sister—adieu!—for to me you are all these.”

“ May 1st.

“ I have had company with me all day, which has prevented my writing. Even at this moment my carriage is waiting to take me to rehearsal ; and if I keep it waiting, I shall be in the predicament of poor Cinderella : my coachman will turn into a rat, and my horses into a pair of mice. I will write you the result of this evening's performance—a fashionable evening here.”

“ May 1st.

“ I have played, my dear friend, and can safely say a better house never was seen—full to suffocation ; indeed many could not gain admittance. I sang better than on Thursday. The other performers were delighted with me. They declare they like me very much, and they came after the opera to congratulate me. I heard them, as they went away, say to each other, ‘ This is something like singing—what splendid talent ! ’ This is very gratifying to

me, though I know it must give pain to others ; but I can't help that."

The foregoing letter depicts Malibran in her true character. It exhibits that mixture of the frivolous and the serious which characterised her manners and conversation. Every stroke of her pen was smart and piquant. Her ideas and feelings alternated rapidly from the most earnest reasoning to childish vanity—from the purest sentiments of friendship to the bitterness of jealousy.

One thing, however, is certain—she worshipped the shrine of friendship with the most ardent devotion. Alas ! in some instances she reposed too firm a confidence in it.

## CHAPTER XVII.

Madame Malibran's favourite characters—She takes the part of Romeo, previously performed by Pasta—Her success—Madame Malibran's first acquaintance with Lablache—His excellent character—The Italian Refugee—Subscription to enable him to return home—Madame Lablache, Donzelli, &c.—Madame Malibran's subscription—Delicate performance of a generous act.

DURING the season of 1830 Madame Malibran performed in the Cenerentola, Romeo e Giulietta, Otello, and Il Matrimonio Segreto. The last-mentioned opera was brought out for the benefit of Donzelli. Madame Malibran took the character of Fidalma. She dressed the part so well, and altogether presented such a

perfect personification of the character Cimarosa intended, that her performance excited the highest admiration. She was dressed quite in the old costume, and, throwing all coquetry aside, she transformed herself into an old woman. The consequence was complete success.

In accepting the part of Romeo, after the brilliant performance of the character by Pasta, Malibran felt she was taking a bold step : she nevertheless undertook it, and performed it triumphantly. Though fully aware of the difficulty of taking a character already pronounced to be the *chef-d'œuvre* of another, yet she resolved to make the trial, and it was crowned with success.

It was during this season (1830) that Maria first made the acquaintance of Lablache, whose high professional talents can only be equalled by his private worth.

The acquaintance soon ripened into a cordial friendship. One day a poor Italian refugee

applied to Lablache for assistance. He had received permission to return home, but alas! he was destitute of the means. The next day, at rehearsal, Lablache broached the subject of the refugee's distress, and proposed a subscription. Madame Lablache, Donzelli, and several others, subcribed each two guineas. "And you, Maria," said Lablache, turning to Madame Malibran, "what will you give?" "The same as the rest," answered she carelessly; and went on practising her part. With this little treasure the charitable and kind-hearted Lablache flew to succour his unfortunate countryman. The next morning Maria took an opportunity to speak to him alone. "Here are ten pounds more for your poor friend," said she, slipping a note into his hands: "I would not give more than the others yesterday, fearing they might think me ostentatious. Take it to him, but do not say a word about it to any one." Lablache joyfully hastened to the lodgings of the Italian refugee. He had left them, and had gone to

embark. Nothing daunted, Lablache proceeded to the Tower stairs. The vessel was under weigh, and his friend on board. He hailed a boat, and offered the boatman a large reward, if he would row after the vessel, and overtake her. He succeeded in doing so. Lablache went on board, and presented the welcome donation to the refugee, who, falling on his knees, poured forth a heartfelt prayer for her who was thus ready to succour a fellow creature in distress.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

Madame Malibran's occasional proneness to satire—Her prejudices and dislikes—Her description of a lady of rank—The French Revolution—Early intimation of that event communicated to Madame Malibran—The fear of political troubles—The Duchess de Canizzaro's *soirées*—The Duke of Wellington's flattering notice of Madame Malibran—Lucrative engagements—Her power of enduring fatigue—Rapid travelling—Reconciliation between Madame Malibran and De Beriot—They leave London for Paris—Madame Malibran separates from Madame Naldi—Terms of her engagement in Paris.

**MADAME MALIBRAN** was sometimes extremely satirical, and she was apt to conceive prejudices and dislikes. Of this the following letter, written in the month of May, 1830, will afford some proof.

“ I dine to-morrow at Madame —’s. What a strange woman she is ! Her manner of receiving me, though I brought a letter of recommendation from her daughter, was not less extraordinary than her mode of asking me to sing at four concerts for her. The remuneration she offered was so different from what I usually receive, that I was compelled rather to give her my services gratis, than stand bargaining with her for an hour. Then she asked me to dinner to-morrow, thinking it a good set-off for my trouble.

“ You know what an effect milk has when taken after oysters. This woman’s look has precisely the same effect upon me. Her cold and disdainful air makes my blood curdle. I dread the idea of going there to-morrow. What an agreeable family dinner it will be !

“ When I write, I fancy you are by my side, and that I am relating all my griefs to you. It appears to me that you are present—would to Heaven I were not mistaken ! Tell me, my

dear friend, whether I am rightly informed: I have heard that we are about to have a second edition of the French revolution. I long to know whether there be any likelihood of its success. If it should succeed, we shall probably have something of the same sort here; in that case I may as well stay where I am. I in vain try to elevate my ideas and become a heroine; I confess myself a sad coward; I cannot get rid of my fears."

It is evident from the above letter that Madame Malibran dreaded to visit France during the troubles of 1830. It appears that she had obtained correct and early information of the struggle about to take place. She treats the subject in her usual style. Though looking forward to the event as one to be dreaded, yet she speaks of it with all the buoyant levity which characterises her correspondence.

Her next letter shows how much importance she attached to public applause.

“ 4th May, 1830.

“ I did not dine with Madame —. I really felt afraid of her, so I merely went in the evening; she, however, improves upon acquaintance. I sang for her, and afterwards went to the Duchess de Canizzaro’s. Madame Lalande was there, but I was the object of all the *fanatisme*. The rooms were crowded, and the company mounted on chairs and tables to catch a glimpse of me. I never saw such enthusiasm. The Duke of Wellington came and shook hands with me: he is a delightful person. All the ladies present asked me to go and see them, and begged of me to give them my address, that they might call on me; in fact, you would have been enchanted had you seen their kindness towards your little girl, your spoiled pet.

“ Adieu—I am off to a rehearsal of the ‘ Matrimonio Segreto,’ which is to be performed on Saturday for Donzelli’s benefit.”

Though engaged at the opera, she made the

most of her time by singing at concerts in London. This, though fatiguing, was highly profitable to her.

On Wednesday, the 24th of May, she thus wrote to a female friend.

“ I must set off for Bath after the Concert of Ancient Music. I shall arrive there at nine in the morning, and at one o’clock start for Bristol, where I am to perform with Donzelli in the third act of Otello. I am to have one hundred guineas for my trip, and shall return on Thursday evening to London to sing at the opera. This is hard but well-paid work.”

In August she again visited Bath, and sang at several concerts, receiving seventy-five pounds for each performance. Having accidentally heard that a concert was to be given at Calais for the benefit of the poor, she instantly ordered her carriage, started off, arrived there, sang

gratuitously, added a considerable donation to the receipts, and returned to England on the following morning.

Considering the delicacy of her frame, it is wonderful how she could bear up against these constant fatigues; but she had been early taught to despise what Garcia used to call *les faiblesses de la sexe*. She cheerfully encountered exertion and fatigue. Her moral courage overcame her physical weakness, and enabled her to achieve what more robust females would have feared to attempt.

But, amidst all her apparent gaiety, our heroine was deeply sensible to the unfortunate condition in which she was placed: deserted by her family, and separated from the man she loved, many were her hours of sorrow. She considered herself slighted by him for whom she had sacrificed all, yet still she could not banish his image from her breast. The following is a letter she wrote to a friend who had

forwarded to her one from De Beriot, from whom she had not heard since their quarrel.

" May 1st, 1832.

" I have received your dear letter, with its enclosure . . . .

" It appears to me that it was very useless to address to you justifications which could be founded only on the errors of one who, on the other hand, conceives that she has a right to complain. Why seek excuses—why represent circumstances in an unfair point of view, for the purpose of self-justification? Might not that *person* be mistaken with respect to the opinions to which the journey would give rise? Had she not previously given sufficient proof that she more readily listened to the dictates of her heart than to those of her understanding? The objection, therefore, ought not to have arisen with her, but with one whose cooler judgment was better enabled to calculate consequences.

“ If you had not read the letter yourself, you might have been misled. But, thank Heaven, you know the whole affair !

“ As to *ton amie*, she wept like a child, on perusing the letter you enclosed. She thought that *perhaps* she had suffered her warmth of temper to betray her too far—that perhaps she did not know him well enough to judge him—that perhaps—in short I cannot tell how many foolish ideas occurred to her. However, I can assure you that she did not sleep a wink during the whole of the night, and in the morning her pale face sufficiently denoted the painful subject which had occupied her thoughts. . . . . But I will say no more on this subject. . . . . This evening I perform in the third act of *Romeo e Giulietta*.”

The above letter, in spite of its obscurity, indicates that a reconciliation between Madame Malibran and De Beriot was not far distant.

Accordingly, a short time after the letter was

written, De Beriot arrived in London, and he and Madame Malibran set out together for Paris.

Soon after her arrival there, Madame Malibran separated from Madame Naldi, and took up her abode in a small house which she had hired in the Rue Blanche.

She entered into an engagement with Severini and Robert, the new directors of the Théâtre Italien. The terms were 1175 francs for each performance.

## CHAPTER XIX.

Differences between Madame Malibran and the directors of the Opera—Imprudent disregard of her health—Evil consequences of her over-exertions—Fainting-fit—Unlucky mistake—The manager's dilemma—A desperate remedy—Madame Malibran's frequent use of restoratives—False reports on this subject—Her indifference to pain and exhaustion.

DURING this season Madame Malibran did not appear in any new characters, but she was more than ever admired in her old parts. She was ably seconded by Mademoiselle Sontag. Between these two charming singers there was a constant struggle for pre-eminence, a desire to outvie each other, which gave a spur to their

exertions, and nightly attracted crowds to hear them.

Madame Malibran was continually at variance with the directors of the Opera. They remonstrated with her on the little regard she paid to the preservation of her health, and the probable injury her voice would incur from her fondness for every species of amusement. Unlike other singers, she never spared herself. On all occasions she was ready to volunteer her services. She amused herself with riding, dancing, and all sorts of violent exercises, and her fondness for late hours was highly prejudicial to her vocal powers.

One evening she had promised me her company at an evening party. The managers unexpectedly determined that a benefit at which she was bound to perform should take place that night. Madame Malibran remonstrated, but in vain. Monsieur Robert was obdurate, "Well," said Maria, "make what arrangement you please: I will be at the theatre because it

is my duty, but I'll go to Madame Merlin's because it is my pleasure!"

She kept her word. After playing Semiramis she came to my house, sang three songs, ate a hearty supper, and waltzed till long after the dawn of day.

She did not, however, always escape the ill consequences of this imprudence, though the public were little aware of the state of suffering under which she appeared before them. On one occasion, having passed the whole night at a ball, on her return home, finding she had to play that evening, she retired to bed and slept till noon. On rising, she ordered her saddle-horse, galloped off, returned home at six, partook of a hurried dinner, and away to the Opera, where she was to play Arsace. Having dressed for the part, she was about to announce her readiness, when, overcome by exhaustion, she fell down in a fainting-fit. In an instant the alarm spread, and assistance was summoned. Twenty different remedies were

tried, twenty bottles of perfume and other restoratives proffered, and among others a bottle of hartshorn. In the confusion of the moment, Monsieur Robert (who was terrified out of his senses by this unfortunate occurrence) unluckily seized the hartshorn, and applied it to the lips instead of the nose of the fainting prima donna. Madame Malibran recovered, but alas ! the hartshorn had frightfully blistered her lips. Here was an unforeseen misfortune ; the house was already filled—the audience were beginning to manifest impatience. It was now too late to change the performance—Monsieur Robert knew not what apology to offer. “Stay,” exclaimed Madame Malibran, “I’ll remedy this.” Taking up a pair of scissors, she approached the looking-glass, and, though suffering the most acute pain, she cut from her lips the skin which had been raised by the blisters. In ten minutes afterwards she was on the stage singing with Semiramide-Sontag.

It has often been said that she indulged in the

use of strong spirits ; that, in short, she was addicted to intemperate drinking. This was a mistake, arising from her occasional use of tonics. To these she had recourse when her failing strength required artificial stimulus. When nature refused to assist her, which was frequently the case, she would fly to these restoratives. She would sometimes take a glass of Madeira to renovate her voice, and enable her to accomplish her fatiguing tasks. It was not any partiality for strong drinks. Could vinegar have produced the same effect, she would have flown to it. To accomplish her triumphs, she set physical force at defiance : nothing daunted her. In the instance above mentioned, her lacerated and bleeding lips caused her to suffer severe pain throughout the whole opera. To gratify her audience at Manchester, she sang three times the duet from *Andromica* within a few hours of her death —a death caused by extreme and unceasing exertions.

## CHAPTER XX.

Garcia engages himself at the opera in Paris—Alteration in his voice—Madame Malibran's fears for her father's failure—Garcia's extraordinary musical talent—Anecdote related by Madame Rossini—Musical *tour de force*.

GARCIA, who had for some time past retired from public performance, now accepted an engagement offered to him by the managers of the Italian Opera in Paris. This annoyed his daughter very much. His once fine tenor voice had become a barritone, and he could no longer touch those parts originally written for him. Madame Malibran trembled for him. She knew the unbending spirit of her father, which, like her own, struggled against every obstacle;

she also knew that his pride would rebel against declining any character proposed to him. She therefore feared that, by some signal failure, he might forfeit those laurels which his former talents had so triumphantly won.

One evening she felt particularly anxious and uneasy. Her father had accepted a part which she well knew he was unfitted for. It was not within the compass of his voice. It was beyond the power he then possessed; but still she dared not say a word to him. In the greatest trepidation she entered her box. A sudden hoarseness attacked him shortly before he proceeded to the theatre. "No matter," said he, "I will contrive to get through my part." And he did get through it admirably. By the ready exercise of that musical talent with which he was so eminently gifted, he adapted the part to the state of his voice, transposing to an octave lower those passages which were too high for him, and adroitly taking the written notes where they came within the compass of his voice. The

promptitude and accuracy with which he performed these changes were truly surprising.

The following anecdote affords a still more striking example of Garcia's musical talent: it was told to me by Madame Rossini, (then Mademoiselle Colbran,) as the most extraordinary instance of musical power she had ever heard of.

Mademoiselle Colbran and Garcia were both engaged at Naples. A new opera was to be produced, and Garcia very much disliked the part allotted to him. He neglected to study it, and made a boast of being totally ignorant of it. At length, after a dozen preparatory rehearsals, during which he had merely looked it over, the day of the final rehearsal arrived. Garcia attended, but, alas! not one note, not one word of his part, had he learned.

Mademoiselle Colbran was in despair. "For heaven's sake!" she said, "let us get this piece put off. If you are so imperfect, we shall all be hissed."

“Don’t alarm yourself,” replied Garcia; “I will get over the difficulty. Of course you know your own part?”

“Certainly,” answered the lady.

“Well, then,” said he, turning to the prompter, “think of nobody but me; give me out the words distinctly, and as to the music, that’s my affair.”

Far from being satisfied, poor Mademoiselle Colbran never slept that night. She almost fainted with agitation next evening when she saw Garcia come on the stage. He had acknowledged that he had not learned a single note of the part he was about to undertake. What, then, was her surprise when, with cool confidence, he sang a beautiful cavatina, and having finished it commenced a well-arranged recitative, and joined in several concerted pieces? In short, he went through the whole opera with unbounded applause, but without giving *one note of the composer’s music*.

The fact was, during the rehearsals he had

attentively studied the harmonies of the accompaniments. Having made himself thoroughly acquainted with them, he was enabled to substitute for the part which the composer had assigned to him, one of his own adaptation, improvising, as he proceeded, in the most extraordinary manner possible.

Madame Rossini always mentioned this as the most astonishing example of musical talent and facility that had ever come under her notice.

## CHAPTER XXI.

Madame Malibran performs *Otello* instead of *Desdemona*—Representation of male characters by women—Madame Malibran visits England and Brussels—She breaks off her engagement in Paris—Perplexity of the managers of the opera—Intercession of M. Viardot—Madame Malibran returns to keep her engagement in Paris—Her sudden refusal to perform—Cause of her indisposition—She forfeits some degree of her popularity.

At the close of the season Madame Malibran chose the opera of “*Otello*” for her benefit. With the view of presenting a novelty, she was induced to personate the Moor, instead of the gentle *Desdemona*; but, like a similar attempt made by Madame Pasta in London, the result was a decided failure.

The small and feminine form of Madame Malibran was in no respect adapted to the manly and heroic character of Otello. The dusky colour, too, with which she tinged her countenance, not only deformed the beauty of her features, but concealed all that flexibility of expression which was their peculiar charm. If in contralto parts the public have sometimes tolerated the representation of male characters by women, it is only because they have not previously seen those same characters personated by men.

In the spring, Madame Malibran returned to London, and played the whole season on the same terms as usual; she also sang in several concerts at Bath, Bristol, and Manchester, passed a few weeks at Brussels, and returned to Paris in the latter end of September.

But previously to the opening of the opera in Paris, her delicate state of health induced her to write to M. Severini, stating her determination to relinquish her engagement, and, without

waiting another moment, she started for Brussels.

This intimation filled the directors of the Opera with dismay. They found themselves suddenly placed in a most difficult dilemma. To supply Malibran's place was impossible. She had a part in almost every piece; it was therefore equally impossible to do without her. To have closed the theatre would have been ruinous to all connected with it. What was to be done? They held counsel together, but they could come to no satisfactory conclusion. At length it was proposed to try what could be effected by the intercession of a friend. At the earnest solicitation of the managers, M. Viardot proceeded to Brussels, to use his influence with the capricious cantatrice. At first she was inexorable, but after some persuasion, and a fair representation of the injustice she was doing to the establishment, to the public, and to herself, she suddenly started up—" You are right; I see now that I have acted inconsiderately; but

when I resolved to leave Paris I was very miserable. Come, let us be off quickly." In a few hours she was again on her way to Paris.

On her arrival, she entered into new terms with the managers, by which she was to be allowed to retire before the close of the season. Her health, however, still continued precarious; and this circumstance injured her much in public opinion. It frequently happened that when an opera was advertised, and people had already secured boxes, bills were pasted at the doors, announcing that, in consequence of the sudden indisposition of Madame Malibran, the opera was unavoidably changed. The next evening she was perhaps well, and played with more than her accustomed spirit. The consequence was, she was looked upon as uncertain and capricious, and she forfeited some share of the popularity she formerly possessed.

She, on her part, became irritable, her good spirits deserted her, and her whole manner appeared to change. One evening, when she

was playing *Arsace*, towards the close of the first act she found herself unwell. On leaving the stage she proceeded to her dressing-room, and locking herself up, declared that she would play no more that night. Entreaty and remonstrance were equally vain; and the manager found it no easy matter to appease the dissatisfaction of the audience, the majority of whom regarded the indisposition as feigned. No doubt it was in part attributable to her keen susceptibility of feeling. She was at that time *enceinte*, and the idea of her dishonour haunted her. She imagined that everybody was aware of her situation, and she became gloomy and fretful. She nevertheless persevered in performing as long as she was able, hoping thereby to mislead curiosity and conjecture.

## CHAPTER XXII.

Coolness of Madame Malibran's former friends—Her father and the Countess de Sparre refuse to see her—A dishonorable suggestion — Madame Malibran's indignation — Her wounded feelings—General Lafayette interests himself to obtain her divorce—Legal discussions—Informality in the performance of the marriage ceremony—Garcia reconciled to his daughter—Joyful feeling excited by that circumstance—Madame Malibran's letter to the Countess de Merlin —De Beriot and his violin.

MADAME MALIBRAN soon began to feel the change of her position in society. Those who had formerly courted her now shunned her, or merely invited her in her professional capacity. Her father, too, refused to see her, and Madame de Sparre, the friend whom of all others she

most esteemed, closed her doors against her. This was the most severe blow of all ; and though her extraordinary talents still continued to win unbounded applause in public, yet her private moments were embittered by the slights of those who once respected her.

Under these circumstances several friends advised her to return to her husband, promising their countenance and support if she would do so.

“ What ! hide my fault at the price of such an act of baseness ? Never ! it were far better to avow my dishonour and suffer for it.”

One evening she came to a musical party at my house. Just as she was approaching the piano for the purpose of singing the duet in Semiramide, “ Eh ben, a te ferisce,” she cast her eyes on a lady who had formerly been her friend, but who now looked coldly on her. Madame Malibran turned pale. Her eyes overflowed with tears, and turning to me, she murmured, “ Not a look, not the slightest sign

of recognition from one who once so sincerely loved me. She considers me unworthy of her notice."

"Courage, Maria," replied I in a whisper; "do not thus give way to your feelings: when the concert is over, we'll see what can be done."

This assurance soothed her, and she went through the duet, though in evident distress. After the concert I spoke to Madame —, who, at my request, consented to exchange a few words with poor Maria. She, however, confined herself to terms of cold civility, and no further reconciliation could be brought about.

Her mortified feelings, and the endeavours she made to conceal her situation, rendered her truly an object of pity. Compelled nightly to appear before the public, and often forced to hear the most coarse remarks, she took a dislike to that profession which had hitherto been to her a source of pleasure.

Her thoughts now reverted with redoubled force to the one all-absorbing hope of her future life—I allude to the legal separation which she had long sought from her husband; this, however, was not now sufficient; a divorce became absolutely necessary, though it was a step attended with much difficulty. The French courts refused to take cognisance of formalities gone through in America, while the tribunals of that country declared their inability to interfere, since the marriage had not been contracted according to the laws of the United States.

In vain did her good old friend General Lafayette pore over the statutes of the two nations, in the hope of finding some precedent that would be applicable to her case. Many distinguished members of the French bar exerted all their ingenuity in endeavouring to discover some informality which might furnish ground for a divorce.

At length the following plan was thought of. Monsieur Malibran was a native of France,

yet, on establishing himself in America, he had demanded and obtained letters of naturalisation. The act which conferred on him the privileges of a citizen of the United States set forth that in receiving those privileges he renounced his character of a Frenchman. On the other hand, Maria Garcia, being the daughter of a Spaniard, who had obtained letters of naturalisation in France, was, though born in Paris, really a Spanish subject. Thus the facts of the case were simply as follows: two foreigners, the one an American and the other a Spaniard, had presented themselves to the French consul at New York to be married; and the consul, supposing these two foreigners to be two French subjects, had married them.

It next became a question whether the French courts of law could adjudge between two foreigners; but to this objection it was urged that Monsieur and Madame Malibran had, subsequently to their marriage, both returned;

that the former had claimed his right as a citizen of France, and had thereby empowered the French tribunals to decide upon his case. Let us now leave the legal proceedings to pursue their tardy course, and return to Madame Malibran.

At this period of anxiety and distress, Garcia relented; he became once more reconciled to his child. Maria's joy on this occasion is best told in a note I received from her, in answer to an invitation I had sent her to come and sing at my house.

“With the greatest pleasure I promise to come to you to-night. I am so happy! Everything has gone well with me since yesterday. This reconciliation is a good omen. I was sure a kind friend like you would rejoice to hear it. As soon as *he* comes in, I shall show him your dear note, and I am sure he will put his violin into his pocket, and attend you with the

greatest pleasure. Adieu—I embrace you with all my heart. I shall try to be with you by nine, or even earlier.

“ MARIA,

“ Que sus bellos y dulces carrillos  
besa con amor y respeto.\*

\* Who kisses your sweet cheeks with love and respect.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

Kind mediation of General Mina—Madame Malibran's last performance in Paris—The notes of the dying swan—Malibran's departure for Brussels—Her return to Paris in disguise—Her accouchement—Resolves not to sing again in public till she is married to De Beriot—An unexpected visit from Lablache—Madame Malibran's sudden departure for Italy—Her passport—Her performance at Rome—Unfavourable reception—French romances.

GENERAL MINA, a friend of Garcia's family, had greatly contributed, by his kind mediation, to bring about the reconciliation between the father and daughter. Madame Malibran felt most grateful to him. But her bosom was still a prey to a thousand conflicting pangs. She felt she was losing public favour in Paris.

Her once enraptured audiences now listened to her mellifluous tones in almost frigid silence. The newspaper critics began to be severe and unjust. A spirit like Madame Malibran's could not brook this. Some weeks prior to the close of the season she announced her farewell benefit, which took place on the 8th of January.

The opera she chose was *Otello*. On this memorable evening she sang in her very finest style, as if to make the Parisians remember her with the deeper regret. Alas ! they then heard her for the last time. She exerted herself to the utmost, and she was sublime. The audience were enthusiastic in their applause. The gentlemen stood on the benches and cheered her ; ladies waved their handkerchiefs, and threw garlands on the stage. With shouts of admiration were mingled expressions of regret for her departure. But her wings were already spread ; her last notes, like the dying swan, rang in their ears.

Next morning she started for Brussels, accompanied only by her waiting-maid. She remained but a few hours in that city. With the assistance of De Beriot she provided herself with a complete disguise, and a peruke of light hair rendered it quite impossible to recognise her. She then instantly returned to Paris, and took up her abode in a retired house, situated at the end of the Rue des Martyrs. There she remained concealed for nearly two months. As soon as she was sufficiently recovered from her accouchement to be enabled to travel, she once more set off for Brussels.

In the company of the man she loved, she tried to forget her past sorrows, and to banish them by mingling in a continual round of amusements.

On leaving the French metropolis, Maria Malibran had secretly vowed never again to sing in public till she was the wife of De Beriot. She had now accumulated 600,000 francs, (24,000*l.*) having performed three seasons in

Paris, and two in London. She was therefore sufficiently independent to be able to abide by her determination.

Subsequent circumstances, however, tempted her to alter her resolve, as the sequel will show. About the middle of July, Lablache visited Brussels, on his way to Naples, and hearing by accident that Madame Malibran was in that city, he immediately called upon her, though he had only a few hours to stay. It was eight in the evening when he made his visit; Madame Malibran was delighted to see him, and pressed him to stay.

“It is impossible,” replied Lablache; “I must retire to bed early, being compelled to start at daybreak on my journey.”

“And why should not I go with you?” said she; “I have no other engagement. Yes, I am resolved I’ll go with you.”

“Then you must be very speedy, for most positively I must be off by six o’clock.”

“Never mind—I’ll be ready.”

Lablache, conceiving this to be a mere joke, laughingly wished her good-night and returned to his hotel.

In the morning, about five o'clock, he was startled by hearing a post-carriage drive up to his door. He jumped up, thinking it was the conveyance he had ordered, and he felt annoyed at having overslept himself. He opened the windows to look out, and Madame Malibran's voice greeted—"Come, Lablache, I'm ready and waiting for you."

Lablache was thunderstruck; he could scarcely believe his eyes. That a resolution should be thus taken so suddenly, and every arrangement made for so long a journey in so short a time, appeared like a dream. For a few moments he fancied he must be mistaken. In half an hour afterwards they were on their way to Italy.

On arriving at the Italian frontier Madame Malibran recollected for the first time that she required a passport, which in the hurry of her departure she had quite forgotten. She was

therefore obliged to remain behind whilst Lablache went forward, and having detailed the circumstances to the authorities at Milan, he obtained permission for her to enter Lombardy.

She did not, however, stay long in Lombardy, but hastened on to Rome, where she made an engagement for four nights. She was, however, but indifferently received; she had the bad taste to sing *two French romances* in the scene of the music lesson in the "Barbiere," which the Romans looked upon as an ill-timed pleasantry, and they showed their sense of it.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

Madame Malibran's engagement at Naples—Jealousy of Madame Ronzi de Begnis—Malibran's acting in the last scene of Desdemona—Donzelli—Madame Malibran's *début* at the Fondo Theatre—Immense crowd on that occasion—She performs in the Cenerentola and the Gazza Ladra—Her interview with the king of Naples—Her extraordinary request to his majesty—The King applauds her on her first appearance—Public performers in Italy—Madame Malibran rides on horseback—Aquatic excursions in the Bay of Naples—Imprudent bathing.

DURING her stay in Rome, Madame Malibran received information of the death of her father. She was so deeply afflicted by the event, that she kept her bed for several days. On this melancholy occasion she wrote a letter to Mon-

sieur Viardot, expressive of her deep sorrow.\* Whilst she was in Rome she signed an engagement with Barbaja, the director of the opera at Naples, for twelve nights performance in that city, on very advantageous terms. To fulfil this contract she left Rome, but on her arrival in Naples she found that Madame Ronzi de Bagnis was already in possession of all her parts at San Carlos, where she was a prodigious favourite, and refused to cede them to the new comer. The consequence was, Madame Malibran made her first curtsey to a Neapolitan audience at the Fondo Theatre, on the 6th of August, in the character of Desdemona. At this theatre she performed ten of the twelve nights for which she had been engaged for San Carlos.

Barbaja, who had the direction of both the establishments, wisely calculated that as almost all the boxes at San Carlos were already let, Madame Malibran could add but little to his

\* See Appendix.

receipts there, whereas her appearance at the Fondo would be sure to draw large sums of money to his treasury.

Here she obtained the most signal success. She introduced the aria from *Donna Caritea* in her first scene in *Otello*, and from that to the closing scene in the opera her acting and singing produced the most electrifying effect upon the audience.

The Neapolitans had hitherto seen this scene tamely performed, or altogether omitted. Madame Malibran was the first who truly depicted to them the sufferings of Desdemona. In the dying scene, the manner in which she endeavoured to escape the fate which an instant before she had invoked, was almost too forcible a representation of reality.

I remember once a friend advising her not to make *Othello* pursue her so long when he was about to kill her: her answer was, "You are right, it is not elegant, I admit; but when once I fairly enter into my character, I never think

of effects, but I imagine myself really the person I represent. I can assure you that in the last scene of Desdemona I often feel as if I were really about to be murdered, and act accordingly."

Donzelli used to be much annoyed by Madame Malibran not determining beforehand how he was to seize her: she often gave him a regular chase. Though he was one of the best-tempered men in the world, I recollect seeing him one evening seriously angry. Desdemona had, according to custom, repeatedly escaped from his grasp. In pursuing her he stumbled, and slightly wounded himself with the dagger he grasped. It was the only time I ever saw him in a passion. But to return to Madame Malibran's *début* at the Fondo.

On that evening the crowd was so great that the Russian and Austrian ambassadors (Count Stackelberg and Lebzellern) could not obtain places: as a great favour, they at last found

room in the fourth tier opposite the grand lustre, which, out of respect to them, was drawn higher up, to enable them to catch a glimpse of the *débutante*.

A few nights afterwards she played in the *Cenerentola*. She was not much applauded, except in the variations of the finale, which were warmly admired. She therefore never again appeared in that opera.

Neither were the Neapolitans altogether pleased with her in the *Gazza Ladra*. Her acting in the quintette scene was thought to partake too much of tragic dignity for a peasant who, whatever her grief might be, could never have thus suddenly acquired an elegance beyond her humble lot.

The rule of Naples is, that when an actress is about to make her *début*, she waits on the king, and solicits the honour of his majesty's presence on her first appearance. In compliance with this regulation, Madame Malibran went to the palace, where she was received most graciously.

On being introduced to the king, she said, hesitatingly, “Sire, if it be agreeable to your majesty, I have come to request that your majesty will be graciously pleased *not* to appear at the theatre to-morrow evening.”

The king, not a little astonished, demanded the reason of a request so singular.

“ May it please your majesty, I have heard that it is the etiquette in Naples not to applaud in presence of royalty: that is to say, unless you graciously set the example.”

The king, perceiving that she was embarrassed, desired her to speak out.

“ Sire, as you are good enough to command me to speak, I will. The fact is, I am so much in the habit of being applauded the instant I appear on the stage, that I am sure, if I were received in silence, I couldn’t sing a note.”

“ Very well,” said his majesty, “ I will set the example. Fear not; you shall be abundantly applauded.”

Madame Malibran returned home highly

satisfied by having thus secured powerful protection. In the evening, just before she made her appearance on the stage, she got between the side-scenes, where she might be seen from the royal box, and having caught the eye of the king, reminded him of his promise by clapping her hands. His majesty, pleased with her freedom and originality, failed not to be as good as his word, and the whole house loudly responded to the royal signal.

On the 7th of September she performed at San Carlos, in the character of Rosina in the Barbiere, and Romeo in the third act of Romeo e Giulietta. She was rapturously admired in both these characters, but the last-mentioned opera was by no means popular.

The Neapolitans are fond of musical novelty, and it was scarcely to be expected that they would listen with pleasure to an opera which had been performed every season during ten consecutive years.

During the fêtes of St. Januarius, (in Sep-

tember,) Madame Malibran took advantage of the temporary close of the theatre to visit Rome, where she played three times, and returned to finish her engagement at Naples.

In Italy public performers are not so well received as in England and France. They are, it is true, highly admired, applauded, and asked to all the leading parties; but they are appreciated merely for their talents, and are never admitted to that equality, that intimacy which is sometimes even more gratifying than pecuniary reward. Madame Malibran felt this acutely; and she endeavoured, as much as possible, to shun those who affected to look down upon her. During her abode in Naples she sought, amidst the varied charms which Nature has conferred on this favoured spot, to amuse herself, without risking the slights to which she was exposed in Neapolitan society.

Her mornings were usually spent on horse-back. She would gallop over the lovely plains of the surrounding country, or climb the rugged

sides of Mount Vesuvius. At other times she would row in the Bay by moonlight. This was one of her favourite amusements; for hours she would thus float on the waves, singing some of her favourite strains, delighted to hear the effect of her voice on the water. This, though imprudent, was not half so perilous to her health as her frequent habit of bathing at an hour when the sun's power is so great that few of the inhabitants of Naples will venture from their houses—and this, too, while she was in a delicate state of health. But she seldom looked forward to consequences, when the whim of the moment was to be gratified.

## CHAPTER XXV.

**The King of Naples and Madame Ronzi de Begnis—Madame Malibran leaves Naples to fulfil an engagement at Bologna—Bolognese society—Gratifying reception of Madame Malibran—She is engaged to perform at Milan—Proposes to cancel her engagement—She secretly quits Milan, and proceeds to Brussels—Birth of her second child.**

**HAVING** played two or three nights beyond the number stipulated in her engagement, Madame Malibran demanded an increased salary, which the manager refusing, she signed an agreement with Azzolini, the director of the theatre at Bologna. On the whole, it may be said that Madame Malibran was not successful at

Naples. This may be inferred from the following passage in a letter I received from her a few days before she quitted that city.

“ I have succeeded well here. I have every reason to believe the Neapolitans appreciate my talent, but they seldom applaud me. This will never do: applause to an actress is like warmth to life—it is a necessity. How can one sing without it? You will perhaps ask, were they deaf? No. Did I sing badly? Far from it. It is merely because I am *too thin*.\*

“ Do you understand me now? No. So much the worse, then, for I'll give you no further explanation. \* \* \* \* \*

“ I still regret my absence from Paris; but I will never return till I am married to De Beriot. Not that I fear the public, whom I have always

\* The meaning of this is, that the king had ceased to applaud Madame Malibran, which she fancied arose from Madame de Begnis being under his protection. Madame de Begnis was at that time very stout.

found kind and indulgent, but on account of my friends and relations," &c. &c.

Madame Malibran arrived about the middle of October at Bologna, and was received with the greatest approbation in "Romeo," "Otello," and "Tancredi."

The society of Bologna was highly agreeable, and their reception of her most flattering. Of all the cities in Italy it is perhaps the most delightful. There the nobility and gentry mingle, without those petty jealousies which the presence of a court gives rise to. Hospitality and kindness are not dependent on the smiles of a prince, or the private likings or dislikings of some upstart ambassador, who, in a greater city, may choose to stamp with the hand of patronage or exclusion some temporary sojourner far better born than himself. In Bologna birth and talent are the only two letters of recommendation; possess either, and you are sure to be welcome.

But to return to my subject. Some of the scenes in the Capuleti were given in a style which perfectly entranced the audience; while Madame Malibran's acting in the Somnambula produced such an effect that she was called *twice* on the stage, after the curtain had fallen, to receive the congratulations of the audience. She was accompanied home from the theatre in a sort of triumph. Her residence was actually surrounded till daybreak by the enraptured Bolognese.

After her engagement in that city she was engaged to perform at Milan, her first appearance being fixed for the 12th of December. She was now for the second time *enceinte*, and this circumstance induced her to propose to the managers to cancel her engagement. This, however, they would not hear of; so, to get rid of their entreaties, and to escape from the fines which she would have been compelled to pay, Madame Malibran at once set out for

Brussels, where she arrived in safety, after a most fatiguing journey. She gave birth to her second child in the month of January, 1833.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

Madame Malibran's alarming illness—Dr. Belloumini—First appearance of Madame Malibran on the English stage—Terms of her engagement at Drury Lane Theatre—Great attraction of her performance—Her musical tour through England—Neapolitan superstition—The *cattiva sorte*—Omission of the third act of Otello—Indifferent reception of Madame Malibran at San Carlos—A new opera by Paccini—Its failure—The funeral procession in Romeo e Giulietta—Failure of Coccia's new opera—Rural excursions, water parties, &c.—Dangerous Feat—Madame Malibran's performance of Norma at Naples—Impression produced by it

As soon as Madame Malibran was sufficiently recovered, she started for London; but, being attacked by a severe sore-throat, she was for some time in doubt whether she would be

able to appear. However, by the aid of Dr. Belloumini, she was in a few hours miraculously cured of this alarming illness, and was enabled in a few days to make her *début* on the English stage. She was engaged for the season at Drury Lane theatre, at the rate of £150 per night!

The interest she excited amply repaid the managers. All London flocked to hear her. Her appearance in the *Somnambula*, which was translated into English expressly for her, formed an epoch in the annals of the English drama, and to obtain a place in the theatre on the nights of her performance was regarded as a prize. After the run of this piece she sang in a revived opera called "The Devil's Bridge," which was followed by a new opera by Chelard. She also sang at concerts, and during a temporary close of the theatre she made a profitable tour through England, receiving large sums for performing at musical festivals and benefit concerts.

Having amassed a considerable sum, she again returned to Brussels, where she sang, not only in public, but twice at the palace. Many blamed the selection of her music on these occasions. It consisted of mere ballads, far too trivial to please those who came expecting to be astonished. But Madame Malibran was always capricious: such is the only excuse I can offer for her thus trifling with public favour.

Renewed engagements demanded her presence in Italy. She again started for Naples on the 8th of November, 1833, and played there in *Otello* on the 14th of the same month. But a peculiar circumstance marred the success of her appearance on this occasion. The superstition of the Neapolitans is proverbial; they entertain the most invincible horror of the *cattiva sorte*, and ascribe to that evil genius the most unbounded influence.

It happened that the 14th of November was a grand gala day in Naples. *Otello* was an-

nounced for the *début* of Madame Malibrán; but, in deference to public feeling, it was deemed necessary to insert the following notice in the bill: "E per non funestar una così lieta ricorrenza, il terzo atto non sarà rappresentato." \* Consequently Madame Malibrán was deprived of the brilliant triumph she had a right to expect from her powerful acting in the dying scene. She subsequently performed in the Prova and the *Gazza Ladra*, but she was received with less enthusiasm than that which had greeted her at the Fondo. The subscribers to San Carlos felt a little pique against her for having, as they supposed, on her previous visit to Naples, preferred the second theatre to theirs. But this was a mistake: in performing at the Fondo Theatre, she merely acceded to the arrangements made by the managers. Paccini had just composed a new opera expressly for her, entitled "Irene." It was

\* To banish evil augury on this happy occasion, the third act will not be performed.

played, for the first time, on the 30th of November, and was instantly withdrawn. Madame Malibran sang in her very best style a fine duet with her sister, Mademoiselle Garcia, and exerted herself in every way, but in vain; the critics condemned the opera, to rise no more.

In Semiramide and Romeo she was also received coldly. In the former opera she offended by introducing several compositions of Mercadante and Vaccai, and in the latter the feelings of the audience were outraged by the funeral procession of Giulietta: they rose en masse, and hissed it off the stage.

On the 19th of January, 1834, she again appeared in a new opera by Coccia, entitled "*La Figlia del aria*:" it only lived three nights.

Weary of trying new characters and failing in them, Madame Malibran again resorted to her old favourite, "*Il Matrimonio Segreto*," in which she played Fidalma. The Neapolit-

tans, however, determined to be dissatisfied, condemned her for thus personating an old woman, and disapproved of her disfiguring her pretty face.

To compensate for these professional disappointments, Madame Malibran devoted herself during the day to every sort of rural enjoyment. Pic-nic water parties, and excursions to explore the beauties of the country in the environs of Naples, were her constant recreations. On one of these occasions, when returning by water from Pausillipo, she took it into her head, on arriving at the line of rocks near the Castel del Nuovo, to jump out of the boat, and to spring from rock to rock, to gain the mainland. This feat was attended by no little danger, and she was several times up to her waist in water. One single false step might have been fatal to her; yet, in the careless mood of the moment, she laughed at the fears of her friends, and looked upon the perilous attempt as an amusing frolic.

Her operatic triumph she reserved for the close of her engagement. On the 23rd of February, 1834, she played Norma, and by her splendid acting produced such a sensation, that the audience, as if to make atonement for former coldness, rose and cheered her for several minutes.

For many days nothing was talked of but Malibran; the Neapolitans forgot all other singers in the admiration they felt for her. But Maria Malibran was not to be so easily won. They had offended her—deeply offended her; she had now convinced them of their error, but determined to give them no further opportunity of undervaluing her merits. She quitted Naples on the 13th of March, leaving behind her a reputation for musical talent seldom equalled and never surpassed.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

Madame Malibran's appearance at Milan—Recollections of Pasta—The acting of Pasta and Malibran compared—Madame Malibran revisits England, to fulfil her professional engagements—Returns to Milan and Sinigaglia—The Château of d'Aucy le Franc—Surprise of the Marquis de Louvois—Illness of Madame Malibran—The Italian ballad-singer—Charity judiciously applied.

ON her arrival at Milan, Madame Malibran had to struggle against the impression which Pasta had left behind her in those same characters she was about to assume. For the first few evenings she found the Milanese faithful to their late favourite, but when she appeared in *Norma* she completely eclipsed her predecessor, and was universally pronounced to be

the *cantante par excellenza*. On a comparison of Malibran and Pasta, the difference between these two gifted persons was obvious. Pasta was the perfection of art and study; her every movement was correct and graceful; but, after seeing her perform once, you might easily know on a future evening what you were to expect. Having once laid down the rules of her action, she never varied from them. She was always delightful, but always the same.

Malibran, on the other hand, was a child of nature. Her gestures, her attitudes, varied according to the feelings of the moment. She never laid down any studied points. She came upon the stage, entered heart and soul into the personation, and allowed her feelings entirely to guide her.

The superior reception she met with at Milan, at a time when the public memory was vividly impressed with the performance of one of the finest actresses that ever trod the stage, is a convincing proof that nature, even in her

wildest moods, is always more pleasing than the most masterly efforts of art.

Having played twenty nights, Madame Malibran suddenly left Milan for the purpose of fulfilling her engagements in England, but not before she had signed an agreement with Duke Visconti (the director of *La Scala*) to return there as soon as she was again free.

In England she merely remained her promised time, and then returned to Italy, having agreed with Signor Azzolini to sing at Siniaglia during the fair held in that town. She was to perform fifteen times between the 15th of July and the 11th of August.

In the course of her journey, as she was passing the Château d'Aucy le Franc, she felt a wish to see the park. It was only six o'clock in the morning, and she thought she might enter it unobserved. She accordingly alighted from her carriage with De Beriot. They were enjoying the stroll, when the proprietor of the domain (the Marquis de Louvois) met

them. For a moment Madame Malibran endeavoured to shun him, and even attempted to run away; but coming directly up to Monsieur de Beriot, whom he had formerly known the Marquis begged to be introduced to his boyish companion, for Madame Malibran was, according to her frequent custom, disguised in male attire. She wore a pair of loose trowsers and a blouse. The surprise of the Marquis may be easily imagined when he discovered who the supposed boy really was. The Marquis urgently pressed them to stay and spend a few days on his estate, but they were unable to accept his invitation. Madame Malibran in her turn invited the Marquis to come and visit her in Naples at the end of the year.

Madame Malibran arrived in safety at Sini-gaglia. During the latter part of the journey she seated herself on the coachbox and drove, though the sun was scorchingly hot. Within a few minutes after she dismounted from the box, she plunged into the sea to bathe. This im-

prudence threw her into a violent fit of illness : she was seized with fever, and her voice became suddenly hoarse. Imagining that this was the mere effect of weakness, and determined not to yield to it, she drank a glass or two of champagne, and thereby made herself worse. A doctor was called in, and it was supposed she would be unable to appear for several weeks; the manager therefore selected a sort of secunda *prima donna*, who filled up the vacancy until our heroine became convalescent. Thanks to a good constitution, her illness was not of long duration. She made her *début* in *Norma*, and filled the audience with delight and admiration. One evening, during her stay at Sinagaglia, she heard a beggar woman singing beneath the window of her hotel. Being struck with the beauty of the woman's voice, she sent for her, and questioned her about her family, &c. Finding that it was not idleness, but real want, had driven the poor creature to her wandering way of life, Madame Malibran made provision for

enabling the woman to receive a course of musical instruction. She placed her under a good master, and paid for her musical education, till death deprived the poor ballad-singer of her liberal patroness.

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

Madame Malibran proceeds to Lucca—She is compelled to sing on the market-place of Sinigaglia—Curious scene—Admiration of the populace—Persiani's *Ines de Castro*—The Ducal court—Gallantry of the Duke and his nobles—New engagement at Milan and Naples—The finale in the *Somnambula*—Extraordinary example of vocal execution—Madame Malibran's dislike to the character of *Tancredi*—The French hairdresser.

ON the 13th of August, Madame Malibran started for Lucca. In passing through the market-place of Sinigaglia, where the fair was held, her carriage was recognised by some of the people assembled, who instantly began to applaud her. At first they surrounded the

vehicle, merely anxious to catch a glimpse of her, till some more hardy than the rest began to call on her to sing. This she refused to do, and begged of them to let her depart quietly: they, however, unharnessed the horses, and became authoritative in their demand. Finding they would not be pacified, or brought to any terms less than instant acquiescence, she called on De Beriot to accompany her, and taking out his violin, complied with their wishes.

It was a curious scene. The vociferous acclamations of the populace, at the conclusion of her song, so pleased Madame Malibran, that she often declared afterwards she never felt more proud than in the triumph she achieved over the stern feelings of this rude auditory. At Lucca she added new wreaths to her laurels by playing for the first time in an opera by Persiani, entitled "Ines de Castro." Her powerful talents rendered it highly successful.

All the young nobles of the Ducal court were sighing at the feet of Malibran. One evening

during her performance the Duke was taking ices in his box, one of which he sent by a courtier to the fair syren. But so jealous were all the others, and so envious were they of him who had been chosen to fulfil the mission, that on his return the Duke broke the cup which had contained the ice into twenty pieces, and gave to each a fragment of the china which had been blessed by the touch of the idol.

Her engagement with the Duke Visconti called her back to Milan. There she was received with rapture. Every night wreaths of flowers, gold and silver bouquets, lines of poetry, and purses—in fact, everything that generosity and admiration could suggest, were thrown to her on the stage. She was frequently obliged to sing the same piece no less than three times over. The Milanese looked upon her as something superhuman.

Triumphs like these repay the artist for those toils and annoyances which are only the price at which such distinction can be earned.

After playing thirteen nights on very liberal

terms, Madame Malibran proceeded to Naples, where she had entered into an agreement to play forty nights at the rate of 2,000 francs for each performance, besides two free benefits.

She reappeared for the third time at Naples, on the 11th of November, at the Fondo Theatre. She selected the *Somnambula* for her *début*. The result proved that she could not have made a better choice. The audience were enraptured. Her peculiar mode of giving the passage,

“ *Io non son rea,*”

in the first act, completely overpowered the feelings of all who heard her.

But who can describe the electrifying effect she produced in the finale?

“ *Ab ! non guinge uman pensiero  
Al contento ond 'io sou piena,*”

By an ingenious transposition of the original phrase of Bellini, her voice descended to the tenor G; then by a rapid transition she struck the G above the treble stave, an interval of two octaves.

The phrase, as Bellini wrote it, is as follows.

- vi-amo, ci for - miamo un ciel d'a-  
 mor, Ah nel-la ter - - - - ra in cui vi-  
 via - - - - mo, ci for - miamo un ciel d'a - mor.  
 etc.

Madame Malibran sang it thus:—

- vi-amo, ci for-mia-mo un ciel d'a-  
 mor, Ah nel-la ter - - - - ra in cui vi-  
 via - - - - mo, ci, for-mia - - - mo un  
 ciel d'a - - - mor.  
 etc.

I have here transcribed the notes; but none can conceive the effect they produced, save those who have heard them sung by Malibran. I will not attempt to detail the numerous beauties which she infused into this charming opera. Suffice it to say, none ever did or ever will equal her in it.

On the 19th she played in Tancredi at San Carlos. Her reception was indifferent. The part was never a favourite with her. She often declared that Tancredi was an insignificant being, with whose feelings she had no sympathy. On the 4th of December she appeared in Norma, and was highly applauded.

In every place in which Madame Malibran performed, she left behind her some memorial of her charitable disposition. She either sought out and relieved some case of private distress, presented a donation to some public institution, or gave a concert for the benefit of the poor.

There resided in Naples at this time a poor French hairdresser, who vainly struggled to

obtain a scanty livelihood. Madame Malibran sent for him, and desired him to attend daily to dress her hair, for which she paid him most extravagantly. As soon as he was gone, she would undo all his curling and plaiting, and again go through the operation of having her hair dressed by another *coiffeur*. Some friends remarked that she gave herself a great deal of useless trouble, and suggested that as she only employed the poor hairdresser for charity, it would be better to give him the money for doing nothing.

“ O no !” replied she, “ he is poor but proud ; he thinks he earns the money, and consequently feels no humiliation in taking it. To receive reward is gratifying ; to accept charity is degrading. Besides, when he hears my head-dress praised, he believes it to be his handy-work, and feels proud of his talents. To confer such happiness is worth any sacrifice.”

## CHAPTER XXIX.

Madame Malibran's friendship sought by persons of high rank.

—The pseudo-aristocracy of Naples—An anecdote—A gypsy party—The villa of the Prince of Capua—Forbidden ground—Warning disregarded—The Sbirri—Madame Malibran's expedient.

THE Marquis de Louvois had not failed, according to his promise, to visit Naples. He became the most intimate friend of Madame Malibran, who thoroughly appreciated his superior merits; whilst he, delighted with her unaffected frankness and excellent feeling, cordially returned her friendship, and did everything in his power to secure it.

The Marchioness de Lagrange, and the Marchioness de la Ferté, two French ladies of rank, likewise offered her their friendship. This was highly gratifying to Madame Malibran, and it amply atoned for the slights she received from the pseudo-aristocracy of Naples. An idea of their exclusiveness may be deduced from the following anecdote which occurred during this period.

Madame de L—— gave a grand masquerade; and desirous to make it as attractive as possible, she wished to secure the presence of Madame Malibran. But as distinction of classes was strictly preserved in "La Bella Napoli," the lady thought it would be better to separate the cantatrice from the rest of the company, and rank her as a professional person. To give her an opportunity of displaying her talents, she erected a tent in the middle of the grounds, in which Maria was to preside as a gipsy, and occasionally to sing. This plan was, however,

frustrated ; several of the leading families intimated to the lady “ that if they were to associate with an actress they should feel degraded, and consequently declined attending the party.” So poor Madame de L—— was forced to give up the presence of her favourite ; but, from a praiseworthy feeling of delicacy, she cautiously concealed from Madame Malibran the reasons which had induced her to alter the arrangements for her party.

The ingenuity of Madame Malibran was put to the test in Naples. Having no female servant with her, she was compelled to arrange and lay out all her theatrical dresses. Notwithstanding this, she had plenty of time to devote to amusement.

One day, when at Castellmare, she formed a gypsy party. The company, who were mounted on donkeys, climbed the verdant rocks, and penetrated the delightful thickets which deck this favoured spot. On approaching the do-

main of the Prince of Capua, they saw posted up a notice forbidding any one, under the severest penalty, to intrude on the sacred boundaries of the Villa Cassina. The merry party, led by Madame Malibran, passed this notification without observing it. They had already trespassed on the forbidden ground, when a band of armed sbirri pounced upon them, threatening them with all the terrors of the Prince's displeasure. Entreaty was vain,—bribery was equally unavailing,—threats were laughed at,—and resistance put out of the question by numerical superiority. In this terrific dilemma, Maria bethought herself of an expedient likely to extricate herself and her friends; namely, to try the power of that voice to whose enchanting spell thousands had bowed. She instantly began to sing one of her finest morceaux. The sbirri appeared transfixated with amazement. In another moment their caps were doffed, and the party were respectfully allowed to depart.

Like the head of Cerberus, which bowed to the lyre of Orpheus, these men were moved by the power of Malibran's captivating talents, and owned a sway as yet unknown to their rough natures.

## CHAPTER XXX.

Road from Naples to Vomero—The Carmelite convent—Madame Malibran singing the Tarantula—The funeral procession—Madame Malibran and the priest—Hospitality of the monks.

LEAVING Naples in the direction of the north-east, the traveller reaches the road to Vomero. The road itself is so bad that few would be induced to traverse it, were it not for the picturesque views it presents.

The smiling scenery of Vomero, of the Villa Belvidera, and further on, the famous fort of St. Eluce, by turns claim admiration. The distant lake of Agnano, the lovely environs of

Puzzoli, next present themselves: and further on is seen the summit of a sharp rock, or rather mountain, on which is situated a convent of Carmelites. These holy men live removed, as it were, from the world, though in the neighbourhood of the world's gayest city.

On the little height in front of the convent, having on its right Vesuvius, and on its left the old crater of Solfatara, commanding a view of the lovely Bay of Naples, sat Malibran one fine autumnal day, surrounded by a band of light-hearted friends. At intervals they danced the merry tarantella, or, accompanied by castanets, they sang the favourite chorus,

La, la, ra, la, la, ra, la, au.

After which Maria would chime in,

Giu la luna in mezzo al mara  
Mamma mia, si salterà  
L'ora è bella per danzare  
Chi è in amor non manchera.

And again the chorus was repeated,

La, la, ra, la, la, ra, la, au.

During this scene a sudden sound was heard, a sort of gloomy echo, which in an instant chilled every breast. Another instant, and the enigma was solved. A procession of monks was seen to issue from the convent, chanting the *De Profundis*; they were bearing a brother's corpse to the grave. In a moment all was hushed; the superstitious Neapolitans in a moment stayed their mirth, and shuddered at what they considered to be a fearful omen. Madame Malibran alone evinced no sign of fear. She walked towards the convent. Over the door were inscribed the words, "Scomunica per le donne." She read this notice, yet she boldly rang the bell. A monk habited in white came out and inquired what she wanted.

"Reverend father," said she, "can I be permitted to see the convent?"

"Impossible, signora; you see, by the interdiction inscribed over our gate, that females are forbidden to enter. Be kind enough, therefore, to withdraw. Ere you do so, however, let me prove to you we are not inhospitable."

In a few minutes more a repast of fruit was sent out to Madame Malibran and her party. When they had partaken of it, and seemed to wish for no more, the priest again appeared. "Begone now," said he, "begone, and pray for us."

## CHAPTER XXXI.

The new opera of *Amelia*—Madame Malibran dancing the mazurka—Her love of dancing—Her deficiency in that accomplishment—*Inez de Castro*—Killing pigs in the streets of Naples—Madame Malibran meets with an accident—Her faith in the homoeopathic system—Her performance of *Inez de Castro* on the night after her accident—Her remark to Mr. Young, the actor—A curious reply.

WHEN the King of Naples was not present at the Opera, the audience warmly applauded Madame Malibran, and thus repaid her for the cold silence with which in the presence of royalty they received her. She now began to display her comic humour in several buffa parts, and she played them beyond all praise.

On the 4th December she played in a new opera, entitled *Amelia*, composed by Rossi. The music was really very tolerable, and the piece by no means wanting in interest, but nevertheless it failed. In this opera Madame Malibran, by an extraordinary whim, undertook to dance the mazurka. She never excelled in dancing, although she was excessively fond of it. Her native grace seemed to forsake her whenever she attempted to dance. Still she seized every possible opportunity of dancing on the stage. In this instance Madame Malibran's mazurka certainly contributed to the failure of *Amelia*.

In *Ines de Castro*, on the 28th of January, she regained her laurels, and obliterated the failure of the preceding month. In the character of Persiani's heroine, she was so touching, so deeply tragic in the death scene, that several females were carried out of the theatre fainting.

Her success on this occasion was equalled only by that which she had achieved in Bologna. She was well supported by Duprez.

She was already announced to appear on the following evening in a new opera by Paccini, entitled the *Colonello*, with every prospect of success, when a sudden accident prevented her.

On the last Sunday of the carnival, during the festival of the *confetti*, she was driving along the Strado Toledo, on her way to dine with the Marchioness Lagrange. Her coachman was endeavouring to pass a narrow and crowded point at the end of the Villa Reale, when a pig escaped from the hands of a man who was about to kill him.\* The animal rushed between the legs of Madame Malibran's horses, which instantly took fright, and set off at full

\* In Naples they frequently kill pigs in the public streets, where these animals are allowed to go at large. They roam about until such time as their owners may think proper to kill them. They then go out and perform the work of slaughter, wherever they may chance to find the animal. A fire is lighted on the spot, and the carcass is prepared for the retail vendor.

speed. They ran for a considerable distance ere they could be stopped in their progress. In the mean time poor Maria was flung from the carriage, (an open caleche,) and had her wrist dislocated. By good fortune a medical professor (Dr. H.) happened to be passing; he had her instantly raised up and carried into the nearest house, where he set her wrist, and having bandaged it properly, had her conveyed to the residence of Madame de Lagrange.

The operation was very painful, but during her sufferings Madame Malibran thought only of the grief which the accident would cause to De Beriot. As Dr. H—— was quitting the room, she called him back. "Do not let Charles know how much I suffer," said she, "for I know how deeply it will grieve him."

The king next day sent his surgeon to Madame Malibran, but she refused to be bled according to his desire, declining any medical treatment, except that which was conformable

with the homœopathic system, in which she had great faith. Her arm was much swollen, and she was advised to keep her bed. This, however, she refused to do, and laughed at the idea. She had a case made to keep it in one position, and she played in *Ines de Castro*, the night after the accident, with such admirable address, that many refused to believe she could really have been so seriously injured.

Some short time after this, she said to Mr. Young, (the celebrated English tragedian,) " My dear friend, I have learned a good lesson by this. I find that hitherto I must have indulged in too much action in the part. I was compelled, in consequence of my accident, to be almost immovable, and yet I never received more applause. I'll act more quietly for the future."

One day an intimate friend accused her of being generally too tame in the opening scenes of her characters; her reply was curious. " I look upon the heads in the pit

as one great mass of wax candles: if I were to light them up all at once, they would waste and soon burn out. But, by lighting gradually, I obtain in time a brilliant illumination. My system is to light up the public by degrees.

## CHAPTER XXXII.

French society at Naples—Enlivening influence of Madame Malibran's presence—Her departure from Naples—Farewell of her admirers—Arozzo—Madame Malibran's visit to the Lunatic Asylum—Effect of her singing on a lunatic—Her reception at Venice—The lottery—Lucky numbers—Lithographic prints—Madame Malibran's gondola.

IN the small circle of French persons of distinction assembled at Naples, Madame Malibran was received with open arms. Her gratitude for their kind reception of her was evinced by devoting her talents to their amusement whenever it was in her power. She would act parts in charades, (several of which were written for her by the Marquis de Louvois,) and was ever ready to sing when called on. In short, she

was the very soul of society wherever she visited, enlivening by her brilliancy and wit the dullest parties, diffusing mirth and good humour wherever she appeared.

Madame Malibran at length bade adieu—alas ! an eternal adieu—to Naples. She left that city on Ash Wednesday, 1835.

On her departure she was followed to the suburbs of the city by an immense concourse of admirers, amongst whom some of the first persons in Naples might be found, shouting out their regrets at losing her, and their sincere hopes that triumph and prosperity might attend her.

Her carriage broke down at Arozzo. Finding that it could not possibly be repaired in less than two hours, she determined to take a view of the town, and among other places she visited the lunatic asylum. She went straight to it, accompanied by some friends who were travelling with her.

The director of the establishment explained

to Madame Malibran the various cases of insanity, and the several modes of treatment; he stated that the general system was to humour and gratify every wish of the patients as far as possible.

"Do you think any of them would like to hear me sing?" inquired Madame Malibran.

"We have here," replied the director, "a young man whose madness is caused by having fallen in love with the queen. He is passionately fond of music, and I should certainly like to see the effect your singing would have on him. But I cannot venture to ask you to sing, since he begins to rave as soon as he sees a female."

"O! as to that," replied she, "I shall pass for a little boy, (she was dressed in male attire.) Let me see him."

Her wish was complied with. She entered the apartment in which the young man was confined. For a moment he gazed on her with evident

curiosity. Madame Malibran approached a piano which stood in the chamber, and ran her fingers over the keys. In an instant the poor maniac was all attention. She sang the romance in *Otello*. "Is this divine?" exclaimed the young man, and he appeared violently excited. "No," he added, "this is the voice of a woman:" then bursting into tears, he threw himself into a chair and sobbed aloud. The director led Madame Malibran away, expressing his thanks for her kindness, and his firm conviction of the salutary effect it had produced on the mind of the unfortunate young man.

Several of the lunatics wished in their turn to sing to Madame Malibran, who very patiently listened to them, although the discordance of their tones was indescribably disagreeable.

Somewhat depressed in spirits by this visit, she left the establishment, after presenting a handsome donation for the patients. She con-

tinued her route by the way of Rome to Venice, where she had made an engagement to play six times for fifteen hundred francs (£600.)

Her reception was brilliant; but it is perhaps better to let her describe it in her own original manner. The following is a letter which she addressed to a friend on this occasion:

" 28th March, 1835.

" DEAR P—

" Don't scold me—do not believe me capable of forgetting you. The truth is, the emperor (whom may God have in his holy keeping!) has quite upset us, holding us all in hot water until he should decide on permitting us to appear on the 24th. As soon as this was fixed, we started for Venice. To describe to you the highly raised hopes of the Venetians would be too long; suffice it to say, my fame had reached them long ere I arrived, and they were all on the tiptoe of expectation.

“ I must relate to you an incident that occurred previous to our arrival.

“ You are aware that they have a lottery in this city, and that, as in Naples, the lower orders are very fond of trying their luck in it. Like true Italians, full of every kind of superstition, my coming appeared to them a happy omen; they therefore combined the four numbers connected with my appearance. Ten, the cantatrice;\* seventeen, the day of the month on which I was first announced; twenty-four, the date of my *début*; and six, the number of my performances. Would you believe it? the four numbers turned up prizes, and the very lowest gainer won nine hundred Austrian livres.

“ From this circumstance my arrival was regarded as a happy augury to the city of Venice, and I am followed about and cheered by the people accordingly. My picture is in every shop window, with lithographic sketches

\* There being ten letters in that word.

of my accident at Naples. Thank Heaven, the pigs don't run about the streets here.

"I have made a great sensation in Venice by the taste with which I have fitted up my gondola; it is painted gray on the outside, red inside, with gold ornaments; it has blue curtains with rich tassels. My rowers are dressed in scarlet jackets, with black velvet collars, and cuffs, straw hats, with black ribbons twisted round them, and blue cloth trowsers. From this you may guess that wherever I go I am instantly recognised by my gondola.

"The fact is, I should fancy myself buried alive, if I ventured to enter one of those hearse-like black gondolas; I could not bring myself to do so. I was unable to appear on the 24th, as first proposed, in consequence of its falling on a very strict festival day. I therefore made my *début* in *Otello* on the 26th. To describe to you the enthusiasm with which I was received would be impossible."

## CHAPTER XXXIII.

Madame Malibran's talent for sketching and for musical composition—Arrival of the Marquis de Louvois at Florence—Interest excited by Madame Malibran at Venice—The mysterious serenader—Madame Malibran's marriage declared null and void.

MADAME MALIBRAN, as I have already stated, possessed a singular talent for caricaturing; but she never exercised this talent in a way to wound the feelings of others. Her sketches were incomparably droll, but not ill-natured. Her great amusement was to sketch the profiles of her operatic colleagues during the time of performance, and this generally when she was waiting between the side-scenes to come on. She frequently took caricature likenesses of all the

performers in the green room, and showed them to the parties themselves, who, knowing that no malice was intended, would be heartily amused.

Her facility in musical composition was not less remarkable. During rehearsal, whilst the hammering of the stage carpenters, the voices of the performers, and the din of the orchestra, were resounding in her ears, I have seen her, with a sheet of music and a pencil, busily at work, noting down, without labour or study, airs worthy of a first-rate composer.

When the Marquis de Louvois arrived at Florence, he found Madame Malibran engaged at the rehearsal of *Norma*. After some conversation, he alluded to an air which she had promised to write for him, and jokingly reproached her for having forgotten it.

“I confess,” replied she, “that I had forgotten it: but no matter; it is not too late to remedy my fault. I will trouble you, sir, for

a leaf of music paper," continued she, addressing the leader of the orchestra, " and a pencil."

They were handed to her: in a quarter of an hour, notwithstanding the noise and confusion which surrounded her, she composed a very pretty romance.

In Venice she was constantly followed by a crowd. If she entered a shop, hundreds instantly surrounded it. If she took an airing in her gondola, (which, as I have before remarked, was easily distinguishable,) a little flotilla convoyed her as she glided along. The quays were lined by persons anxious to see her. Her landing was watched for, and her progress to her abode was a sort of triumphal procession.

One evening, after playing in the Somnambula, Madame Malibran was tempted by the fineness of the night to sit for some time enjoying the breeze in her balcony, which overlooked the canal. She had been seated there for some time, repeating, unheard as she supposed, some

passages of the songs she had just been singing at the theatre, when a gondola suddenly stopped beneath her balcony. The next moment a clear, finely-toned male voice, taking up the air she had just finished, repeated it, but accompanied with words calculated to hurt her feelings, and which conveyed censure upon her private conduct.

Between each verse the mysterious and insulting serenader made a solemn pause, and then recommenced his strain.

It was now midnight; no one but the mysterious singer was near, and Maria felt a superstitious awe creeping over her. But, determined to overcome it, she mustered all her courage, and instantly sang to the same air a few extempore lines, pointing out the impropriety of thus assailing an unoffending female, and begging him to accept a few pieces of silver. She wrapped the money in a piece of paper, and having set light to it, that it might not be lost in the dark, she threw it down to

the gondolier. He carefully picked it up, seized his oars, and in another instant was out of sight.

On the 6th of March the Tribunal de Première Instance in Paris pronounced the marriage of Maria Garcia with M. Malibran to be null and void. The husband had rendered himself subject to the laws of France by taking out his rights of citizenship during his last visit to that country.\* This decision once more restored Maria to happiness.

\* See Appendix.

## CHAPTER XXXIV.

Embarrassments of Signor Gallo—Madame Malibran's performance for his benefit—Crowded theatre—The *divina cantatrice*—Herculean labour—Drilling an orchestra—A panic—The white doves—Illuminated gondolas—The cup of wine.

MARIA, having finished her engagement at the Fenice theatre, was preparing to quit Venice with a light heart, when she learned that Signor Gallo, the manager of the secondary theatre in that city, was about to become a bankrupt. He was a worthy man; but having met with an unusual series of misfortunes, he was on the eve of failing. The moment she heard of his

embarrassments, Madame Malibran determined on exerting herself to save him. That same evening it was publicly announced that "Madame Malibran would appear in the Somnambula, at the second theatre, for the benefit of Signor Gallo."

Every place in the house that could be secured was instantly taken. The idea of once again hearing the *divina cantatrice*, for so they had surnamed her, made every one flock to the long-deserted theatre; and lucky were they considered who could obtain the chance of once more hearing her.

At the rising of the curtain, the house was crammed to suffocation. Hundreds were waiting outside, clamorously, but vainly, demanding to be admitted; and many a gondola was seen gliding unwillingly away, whose disappointed occupants had been turned from the door.

Meanwhile Madame Malibran's task was almost a Herculean labour. The company, as

might be expected under such circumstances, was most inefficient, and the orchestra still worse than the singers. In vain had Madame Malibran solicited the band of the Fenice to come to her assistance, and second her exertions. They all declined, and the labour of drilling the bad orchestra devolved wholly on herself.

At length the important evening came, and for a few moments all went on well. But no sooner did the tenor singer, who represented Elvino, advance to take his part in the duo, *Son geloso del zefiro errante*, than he was seized with a sudden panic, and totally forgot his part. Murmurs and pleasantries resounded through the pit; but Madame Malibran, without being in the least disconcerted, said in a low tone of voice to her trembling companion, " Sois tranquille, je vais t'aider;" and taking up the tenor part, she blended it with her own, singing passages of each alternately, making of the whole a beautifully arranged air. The tenor

singer by this means had time to recover himself, and was enabled to take up his part at the close of the duo.

The audience, charmed by this example of talent and presence of mind, expressed their admiration by a tumultuous burst of applause.

When Madame Malibran arrived at the last air, the gentlemen in the pit mounted on the benches and waved their handkerchiefs, whilst the ladies threw wreaths and nosegays on the stage. With eyes streaming with tears, she advanced to the front of the stage to return thanks. At that moment two beautiful white doves flew from one of the upper boxes, and fluttered several times round the head of the prima donna.

Meanwhile the populace on the outside of the theatre were waiting patiently with a flotilla of illuminated gondolas to convey Madame Malibran home in procession; but she was so overcome with agitation and fatigue, that she slipped away in a hired boat. A vast multi-

tude of people collected around her well-known bark, anxiously expecting her appearance; but as soon as her departure was discovered, they hurried after her, their torches shooting along the surface of the water like meteors. Many of the gondolas overtook Madame Malibran's boat; and the consequence was, that when the fair syren came to her place of landing, a joyous crowd were already assembled there, who received her with the demonstrations of honour due to a queen, and greeted her on her passage from the quay to her place of residence.

She had no sooner entered her house than a deputation of gondoliers requested leave to address her. They were admitted. The spokesman of the group stepped forward, and presenting a gilt cup filled with wine, he begged her to touch it with her lips, ere they carried it out to their comrades who were assembled beneath her windows. Madame Malibran instantly complied with this request, and stepping into the balcony, she raised the cup of wine to

her lips. The light of the numerous torches fell full on the manly and sunburnt countenances of the gondoliers, and produced a most picturesque and striking effect.

The deputation had now returned to their brethren, bearing the cup, and each gondolier in his turn raised it to his lips, and drank the health of Maria Malibran.

## CHAPTER XXXV.

Madame Malibran's remarks on herself—Visit to Brussels—Engagement at Drury Lane—Salary—Letter from M. de Beriot—Excessive fatigue endured by Madame Malibran during her London engagement—Her performance of *Fi-delio*—Grisi in the *Puritani*—Madame Malibran's engagement at Lucca—The cholera in Italy—Relics.

MADAME MALIBRAN was by no means insensible to these marks of admiration and regard; but though elated at her success, and flattered by these triumphs, yet they never inspired her with feelings of self-importance or pride. I have frequently heard her say, when speaking of herself, “The severe manner in which I was brought up to a certain extent soured my

temper; and I should have continued petulant and ill-humoured, but for the kindness I have experienced from my friends. That kindness has soothed my feelings, and filled me with gratitude."

After spending a few days in Brussels, she again visited London, where she had concluded an engagement with Bunn (the manager of Drury Lane) to perform thirty nights, between the 1st of May and the 30th of July. For these performances she was to receive £3,775. She played in the *Somnambula*, in *Fidelio*, and in the *Devil's Bridge*.

The English are not an enthusiastic nation, but Madame Malibran had no reason to complain of their coldness to her. They applauded her in the most flattering manner, and never failed to encore her in the last air of the second act of *Fidelio*.

Madame Malibran was still unmarried, and consequently ill at ease. The following letter from De Beriot to a friend will best describe her situation.

“ I much fear the Lucca affair will not be settled without our being forced to visit that city. Our impresario has not yet been able to come to any settlement with the government ; we shall, therefore, be unable to start for Italy for some weeks. We have some thoughts of accepting terms at Covent Garden for the month of July. This is the best musical season ever known in London. We have concerts almost daily. The theatres are making a great deal of money, particularly Drury Lane. When Maria appears in the *Somnambula*, the house is always crowded. She is quite well, notwithstanding the extraordinary fatigue she undergoes. The following is a fair average of her daily labour : at nine, an hour’s practice with the piano ; at ten, rehearsal at the theatre ; concerts from one till four ; opera from seven till ten at night, and concerts again till daybreak ; then poor Maria, wearied with her toil, snatches a few hours’ repose ere she renews her drudgery on the succeeding day.

“ All this is against my wish, but what can I do? She is, as you know, indefatigable, and refuses nothing. During her absence I frequently refuse offers in her name. If I allowed her to follow her own bent, she would certainly kill herself by fatigue.

“ Fortunately she has got through the most harassing portion of her engagement. She played last night *Fidelio*, for the first time in English, with the most complete success. They made her give the last scene twice. Grisi has also been very successful in the *Puritani*. She and Maria are great friends, and constantly sing duets together at private parties. Since the days of Sontag, nothing so perfect has been heard. They are to sing the duet in *Semiramide* at our concert on the 20th of June; and as it will be the first time they have been heard together in public, I shall take care to announce it in a bill three yards long, containing letters of at least a foot in height. I reckon on a crowded room. By letters from Paris I am

informed that we must yet wait ten months longer ere we can be married ; that being the period prescribed by law for widows to remain single. This annoys us much ; but even if we should get over this obstacle, there is still another which presents itself ; we have neither of us a domicile in Paris, which it is necessary to have previously to our marriage. We must be united in France, and act strictly according to French law, the divorce having been pronounced according to the French code," &c.

No sooner had Madame Malibran completed her engagement in London than she started once more for Italy, having entered into terms with Azzolini to perform at Lucca. There however, she was destined to meet with disappointment. The cholera had just broken out in that part of Italy, the country was in a state of dire alarm, and not even the Opera was thought of.

Once or twice, it is true, the charms of the

fair warbler overcame the public fear. The theatre was frequented, and the inhabitants of Lucca once again listened with rapturous joy to their favourite. On one occasion a party of young men (many of whom were of the highest birth) unharnessed her horses, and dragged her in triumph to her residence, where they begged from her her bouquet, her gloves, her handkerchief, and her shawl, to be distributed as relics amongst them. On presenting herself at the window, she was greeted with loud cheers, whilst the military band of the garrison performed a new piece of music composed in honour of her arrival.

Madame Malibran left Lucca amid the regret of the inhabitants, who expressed sincere hopes that she might escape the ravages of the unsparing malady, which for a time stalked with demon strides through "sunny Italy."

## CHAPTER XXXVI.

The cholera at Leghorn—Madame Malibran's letter to the Marquis de Louvois—Sanatory regulations—Journey to Milan—Dangers—Madame Malibran's courage—The muleteer.

THE day before Madame Malibran's departure from Lucca, the cholera broke out at Leghorn, where the quarantine laws were immediately put in force.

Before she quitted Lucca, Madame Malibran wrote the following letter to the Marquis de Louvois:

“ 2nd September, 1835.

“ . . . . Come speedily to Milan. We are

off from this place as quick as we can go; flying, not from the fear of the cholera, but the prospect of the *cordons sanitaires*, and a thousand other rigorous measures which this disorder has introduced, to the utter destruction of my unfortunate impressario. *Non dico niente di noi.* You must guess all about us. The Duke has valiantly run away. The most pious D — has done the same, and has forgotten to leave any funds to meet the *choleric attack* to which his retainers may be exposed. So be it. Some folks take great care of themselves for the love of God and their confessors, having before them the wholesome proverb, *Qui trop embrasse mal etreint. . . .*

“ It appears that the Duke V — i is in a dreadful panic about the cholera, and already repents having engaged me. Nevertheless I am told they expect me at Milan with *devotion*, being fully persuaded my appearance will act as a sort of camphor bag, and drive away infection. As to me, I have no fear for myself; my only

horror is, playing to empty benches. I confess that is . . . .

“ I believe there is but one remedy, and that is, to lead a gay life, to go to balls, eat and drink homeopathically, and leave the rest to Providence.

“ I trust the marchioness is in good health. She was so kind to me, I can never be sufficiently grateful. I am out of spirits, for every body is speaking of cholera, death, and purgatory, till I fancy myself quite up to the neck in the latter. So I'll not annoy you further with my complaints, hoping soon to see you at Milan.

“ Adieu—adieu. By-the-bye, pray write to good Monsieur —, and tell him I've not forgotten him. I trust you received my first letter safe. I mentioned in it that we had spent a very pleasant day with Madame de Lagrange, who talked much of you. Adieu.

“ I remain,” &c.

The sanatory regulations adopted to check the progress of the contagion were so severe, that it was with difficulty Madame Malibran could reach Milan, where she was bound to appear in the beginning of September. That month had now commenced, and she had only a few hours left. The roads in the direction of Modena were already guarded, for the disease had shown itself in that neighbourhood, and no conveyances were allowed to pass.

Notwithstanding these obstacles, Madame Malibran determined on fulfilling her engagement. One road only was open, but that presented dangers and difficulties which no female but herself would have dared to encounter. But Madame Malibran instantly resolved to travel by this latter road. Next morning she started by way of Carrara and Lavenza; but finding the quarantine laws extended there, she deemed it advisable to try the mountain passage by Carrara, which was

nothing more than a mule-track formed along the verge of several dreadful precipices. Nothing daunted, Maria set out: a second carriage followed her, containing some of her attendants.

To describe the difficulties, the imminent dangers she encountered during this journey, would be impossible. In some parts the road was so narrow, that while the wheels on one side rested on terra firma, those on the other were overhanging a terrible abyss, and were supported by cords which it required about thirty peasants to hold.

The hardy muleteers themselves often shrank before the appalling terrors of the journey; but Madame Malibran encouraged them by her cheerful smiles and her happy confidence. With a look of gaiety and courage she accompanied them on horseback, occasionally singing to them, and using every endeavour to keep up their spirits.

As she passed through several miserable villages, she bestowed charity on the wretched

inhabitants, who refused to believe she was anything less than a princess of the first rank.

At Carrara a poor sculptor requested that she would sit to him for her bust. She instantly alighted from her horse, gave him a sitting for half an hour, and then continued her journey.

Just before she arrived, a muleteer was thrown from his mule, which had suddenly become restive. Madame Malibran herself dressed his wounds, and when, on recovering, he declared his fear of again mounting, she instantly desired him to take her horse, and getting upon the mule, she soon brought the refractory animal to proper subjection.

## CHAPTER XXXVII.

The cholera panic—Difficulty of obtaining food—Money received in basins of vinegar—Madame Malibran's engagement at Milan—Terms of her contract with Duke Visconti—Domzetti's *Maria Stuardo*—Political allusions—Suppression of the opera—High favour enjoyed by Madame Malibran at Milan—Attentions shown to her on her departure—Her arrival in Paris—Marriage of Madame Malibran and M. de Beriot—Musical party—Thalberg's performances on the piano-forte—Madame Malibran's donation to the poor.

NOTWITHSTANDING the courage with which Madame Malibran struggled against the difficulties of her journey, yet she had a still harder task in her endeavour to soothe the alarms of the panic-struck country people, who fled from the

approach of every stranger as from the harbinger of death itself.

Our travellers were never allowed to stop for a moment in a village or town. Permission to enter was accompanied by a condition that they should pass quickly through without halting. They were frequently compelled to journey on for four-and-twenty consecutive hours without food, and were obliged to sleep in the open air, or in some outhouse, where the rats, more bold than the human species, failed not to visit them during their slumbers.

When they got food, it was sometimes almost thrown at them, and the money they paid for it was received in basins of vinegar. The authorities read the bill of health exhibited to them, at a distance. No person ventured to come in contact with another. Never was terror so generally prevalent.

In spite of these adverse circumstances, Madame Malibran arrived at Milan in good health and spirits. Her reception was most flattering.

The following sketch of her agreement with Duke Visconti will show how highly her talents were appreciated.

“ Four hundred and twenty thousand francs, (£16,800,) with a palace to lodge in, a carriage and a free table, for one hundred and eighty performances, to be distributed through five seasons, viz.

“ Autumn 1835.

“ Carnival commencing the 10th of December, and ending the 10th of March, 1836.

“ Autumn 1836.

“ Carnival, until March, 1837.

“ Autumn 1837.”

The two first seasons were the only ones which she was enabled to fulfil. She played in Otello, I Capuletti, La Somnambula, and in Vaccai's Giovanna Grey. She was also very successful in Domzetti's Maria Stuardo; but in consequence of several political allusions in that opera, it was after a few evenings withdrawn.

The energy with which Madame Malibran gave these points, created uneasiness in the government. This circumstance caused the suppression of that beautiful opera.

At Milan our fair *artiste* was courted by the very highest society. She was asked to every fete, and considered the chief ornament of every saloon.

On the day of her departure, every person of distinction in the place left their cards for her. At night, after her performance, she was conducted to her palace by a procession of young nobles bearing torches. On her arrival at her residence, (the Palazzo Visconti,) she found the garden brilliantly illuminated, while a military band, stationed on the banks of the canal, played several grand airs. Next day, gold and silver medals were circulated among her admirers, exhibiting her likeness on the one side, and a complimentary allegory on the other.

She arrived in Paris about the end of March,

where every preparation was made for her marriage.

She now seemed to be restored to happiness, for the false position in which she had for so long been placed had always weighed heavily on her mind. She was anxious to become the wife of De Beriot, in order to calm the scruples of her conscience, and to possess a legal right to his affections. Every day she appeared to become more devotedly attached to him.

The marriage took place on the 20th of March, in presence of several of the mutual friends of the bride and bridegroom. The Marquis de Louvois and Monsieur Perignon were the official witnesses. In the evening they assembled at the residence of Monsieur Troupenas, the music publisher, where the party were entertained by a little concert. Madame de Beriot, her husband, Thalberg, and Rossini, were the principal performers. The joy which the occasion inspired, added a fresh charm to their superior talents. This was the first time

Madame Malibran had heard Thalberg, and she was quite enchanted by his performance.

That evening she gave one thousand francs to the poor of Paris.

## CHAPTER XXXVIII.

The Gamin de Paris—Bouffé, the comic actor—Visit to Brussels—Concerts for the benefit of the Polish refugees—Return to London—Lord L....—An equestrian party—Madame Malibran's horse takes fright—Her accident—She conceals it from De Beriot—Its serious consequences.

MADAME MALIBRAN remained only a few days in Paris, but, previously to her departure for Brussels, she visited several of the minor theatres. She saw Bouffé in the Gamin de Paris, and was delighted with his performance. She wept and laughed by turns, as he enacted the droll and the serious parts of this little piece.

On her return to Brussels she determined to remain quiet for some time at her residence at Ixelles, (half a league from the city,) but her active nature could not long endure this. She gave two concerts for the benefit of the Polish refugees, one at the concert rooms, and the other at the theatre. She was well received, and a large sum was collected. This was the last time she ever was heard in the Belgian capital, nor will the recollection of her seraphic tones be cherished less fervently than the benevolent feelings which prompted her to lend her talents in aid of the distressed and persecuted.

On the 19th of April she set out for London, where she was again received in the most flattering manner. Many even thought her voice improved, and I firmly believe such to have been the fact, for she never relinquished her practice and her endeavours to overcome certain weak notes in her voice. This was clearly perceptible to those who nightly heard her. Passages

which she did not venture to try when she first visited England, she now executed with ease.

One day, during her stay in London, Lord L—— proposed an equestrian excursion, at the same time offering Madame Malibran the use of a fine horse, which he assured her was well trained to carry a lady. De Beriot was anxious to decline the offer. He was averse to it for several reasons ; but as his wife was resolved to accept the invitation, any opposition on his part he knew would be fruitless. The party accordingly set off, but without him.

Madame Malibran, though a most courageous horsewoman, on this occasion showed evident signs of timidity. The instant the animal displayed the slightest symptom of spirit, she betrayed signs of alarm. This probably arose from the twofold circumstance of her recent want of practice in riding, and her being already advanced in pregnancy. The horse, finding her hand relax, began to increase his speed, and at length broke into a rapid gallop. Madame

Malibran saw a turnpike-gate before her, and beckoned to the keeper to shut it. The man, misunderstanding her gesture, threw the barrier wide open. The next moment the horse had got the bit between his teeth, and was dashing on at his utmost speed. Her companions, seeing her danger, instantly slackened their pace, thinking, if they approached her, that it would only tend to excite the horse, and increase the danger of the rider.

In a few seconds Madame Malibran felt the crutch which supported her knee give way, and the stirrup twist round her ankle.

A second turnpike was now in sight, but no one near to close it. The gate consisted merely of a bar, which lifted up and down, and having been left open, now overhung the road about twelve feet from the level of the ground. This was her only chance, and, like a drowning man grasping at a straw, she determined on springing upwards and catching at the bar, allowing her horse to leave her behind, in the hope

that the bar would descend with her weight, and bring her safely to the ground. Throwing down the reins, she raised both her arms, and by a sudden spring caught a firm hold of the bar. But alas ! her foot was entangled in the stirrup, and in another instant she was dragged along the ground by the now infuriated animal, her head dashing every moment against the flint stones which lay in the road. After being thus drawn for about thirty yards, her stirrup leather fortunately broke and released her. When her friends came up, they found her covered with blood. She had received several wounds in her head, and her face was frightfully cut. She was in a state of insensibility.

When she recovered, she found herself in bed in her own house. Her first question was, " Is my husband at home ?" Being answered in the negative, she instantly rose, went to the looking-glass, and began washing the blood from her face and head, arranging her hair, so as to conceal as far as possible the accident which

had happened. M. Benedict, one of her intimate friends, at that moment called in. He besought her to lie down again.

“ Not for the world,” said she, “ It’s a mere trifle—I shall be better presently; all I desire is, that it may be kept secret from De Beriot; he will be miserable if be should hear of it.”

“ But seeing you in this state, he must know it.”

“ He shall not know it, and I will perform this evening as usual.”

“ Are you mad?”

“ Perhaps so; but I’ll do it.”

And again she endeavoured to hide, by every means in her power, the wounds she had received.

When De Beriot returned in the evening, she told him she had fallen down stairs, and thus accounted for her appearance, having in the interim written to Lord L\_\_\_\_\_, begging of him not to let De Beriot know how the accident had really occurred.

That evening she sang at the theatre as

usual, but the seeds of death were already implanted in her. She neglected being bled, and she consulted no medical man. In a very short time she began to feel seriously the consequences of her imprudence.

## CHAPTER XXXIX.

A lively letter—Concert at Liege—Father L....—M. Guis—  
M. Mayerbeer—His hospitality at Naples—Monsieur and  
Madame C——n—The Duke of Devonshire—Madame Malibran's performance at Aix-la-Chapelle—Her château near  
Paris.

ABOUT the end of July, Madame Malibran returned to Belgium, where, notwithstanding her debilitated health, she gave a concert on the 12th of August.

By the following letter it will be seen how lightly she could joke in a moment of severe bodily suffering.

Brussels, 18th August, 1836.

“ Of all the wicked, deceitful men on earth, you are the worst. You set my mouth watering by false promises, and then . . . . . But, *n'importe*, I will never call you dear Father L—— again. I will scold you, although it goes against my heart to do so, if you do not start for Brussels the instant you receive this epistle.

“ We shall remain here till the 14th, when there is a concert at Liege, where De Beriot will play, and I *squal*.

“ It is now the 25th;\* you can therefore spend a full fortnight with us. This is the least Father L—— can do to please his adopted children, without prejudice to little Jules. Your love for him should now be on the decrease, for he is of course getting older, and consequently more mischievous, more wicked, and more *wise*.

\* This part of the letter would appear to have been written a week subsequently to the commencement.

“ Tell him I don’t forget him, and that I hope he is becoming generous and fond of truth, and that he keeps his hands and nails always clean. Do you recollect our fun at Venice? I wonder what has become of my friend *Vranconi*, and our companion M——. Have you seen M. Guis? He left London in despair at not having met you, and desired me to remember him to you most kindly. So now I have executed his commission, though I had hoped to do so in person. Is M. Mayerbeer in France? Pray tell him I shall never forget his kind hospitality at Naples.

“ I met the other day M. and Madame C——n in London; they affected scarcely to know me, fearful that any intimacy with me might injure them in public opinion, and more especially in that of their patron, the Duke of Devonshire. They cautiously shrank from every allusion to the many pleasant evenings we passed together at Naples. C——n and his wife are people of the world, and only

recognise those whose acquaintance can do them good. I confess I was foolish enough to feel vexed with these people, whose conduct is the more absurd, inasmuch as they were always glad to receive me at their own house, and come to mine, before the authorities were pleased to pronounce their formidable consent on that happy day, when your presence added much joy to the occasion.

“I have not heard one word lately about good Mamma L——. I wish you would tell me all about her and Minfili when you next write.

“Charles has very bad eyes, or he would himself indite a P. S. He desires me, however, to add his prayers to mine, and beseeches you to come soon to us.

“Adieu, dear father. I embrace you with all my heart.”

A few weeks after this date, Madame Malibranc played in the *Somnambula* at Aix-la-Chapelle, and then proceeded to France, where

she had purchased a small property (Le Château de Roissy) near Paris. There for a time, surrounded by her friends, she forgot her sufferings, and became gayer than ever.

## CHAPTER XL.

Madame Malibran's impaired health—Ballads of her composition—The Romance of Death—Benelli—Curious coincidence—Exuberant joy—Presentiment of early death—Madame Malibran's love of childish amusements—The Girolamo Theatre at Milan—Madame Malibran's peculiar tastes ascribable to her Moorish origin.

SINCE her accident, Madame Malibran had suffered from continual headaches and nervous attacks ; and though she never complained, yet her altered looks often betrayed her inward agony. In spite of indisposition, she continued to work hard at a set of ballads she had promised to compose. She would often labour at

them with one hand, whilst with the other she pressed her throbbing temples, and endeavoured to allay the torture she suffered. Her anxiety to accomplish this task appeared like a presentiment that little of life was left her to finish it.

During her abode at Roissy, she composed the romance entitled Death ; the words were given her by Lablache, and were written by Benelli in a moment of sardonic gaiety. They are as follows :

Ton ton, chi batte là ?  
Ton ton, sono la morte,  
Ci camière hei presto,  
O là, apri le porte,  
Sono tré mesi.  
Che la salute in voce  
Esa mi prende à ginoco,  
Si mostra è se ne và,  
Io la salute in voce hà  
Esa mi prende à ginoco  
Si mostra, è se ne và :  
Ecco villane vende mia

Conta co frà tim coro  
Ebra si sta con loro.  
Di mè, non hà pietà.....  
Ton ton, chi batte là ?  
Ton ton, sono la morte.

It is curious that Benelli died two months after he wrote the above lines, and Madame Malibran died one month after she set them to music. This romance was her last composition.

Madame Malibran's alarming state of health did not prevent her from fully enjoying her happiness, in being at length the wife of the man she loved.

In the intervals between her severe fits of headache, I have seen her indulge in the most extravagant flow of spirits. She would run about, dance, disguise herself, paint her face to perform burlesque scenes: never was joy so exuberant.

One of the most remarkable traits in Madame Malibran's character was her presentiment of early death, which was unhappily but truly

accomplished. She felt a firm conviction that she was to die in the flower of her age: that long ere even her girlish gaiety should have passed away, the grave was to receive her. This belief may in some degree account for many of her otherwise strange whims. Her desire, for instance, to indulge in the amusements of her childhood, appears to have arisen from this cause. She wished to preserve all her early pleasures, confident that when they ceased to gratify her, she was destined to die. She also loved toys to the last hour of her existence. She frequently nursed dolls with delight, and was in raptures when she went to the Girolamo Theatre (a puppet show) at Milan, which she frequently visited.

These seemingly puerile tastes may also perhaps be ascribed to her Moorish descent, which none could doubt, since it was legibly written in all her features, and shone conspicuously when anger or enthusiasm lighted up her speaking countenance. Her passion for dancing (in

which she never excelled) was also evidently of African origin. Her tastes were certainly not those of a European.

## CHAPTER XLI.

Manners and habits of Madame Malibran—False and exaggerated accounts—Her love of violent exercises—Madame Malibran accused of the too free use of strong drinks—The charge refuted—A nauseous beverage—Madame Malibran's strict propriety of manners—Her uncontrollable vivacity—Singular reply to De Beriot.

MANY false and exaggerated statements have been made respecting Madame Malibran's manners and habits of life. To the charge of being masculine she herself used to plead guilty, inasmuch as she was passionately fond of riding, and indeed of all violent exercises. She delighted in long walks. She would think nothing of travelling day and night during the most inclement weather; and sometimes taking the reins

herself, she would mount the coach-box, and drive amidst hail and snow. She was fond of skating, swimming, and fencing; in short, she excelled in every manly exercise. Yet who ever was more gentle in her domestic circle? Who could soothe the pillow of sickness with more delicate attention? Who, like Madame Malibran, could move the feelings by the truly feminine expression of grief?

She has been accused of an over-indulgence in the use of strong drinks; but no allowance has been made for the fatigues she was forced to endure, and the consequent necessity of stimulus.

From this charge I can conscientiously exculpate her. Her favourite beverage was wine and water—she frequently took water only. When she had to sing, she was forced to take something to help her to sustain the exhaustion which necessarily attended her extraordinary exertions. On these occasions she usually had recourse to a mixture of coffee and white bur-

gundy, or rum, sweetened with a great quantity of sugar. She conceived that this strange compound, diluted with hot water, imparted strength to her voice.

One day Baron de Tremont happened to call just as she was going to the theatre; she was very much excited.

“What is the matter?” inquired the baron, seeing her lips trembling with excitement, and her eyes nearly starting out of her head—“what is the matter?”

“I am half mad with rage,” she replied. “What do you think, baron? they say I am addicted to drinking; but stay—you shall know what I drink.”

With these words she took a china cup from a sideboard in the room, and, without giving the poor baron time to resist, raised it to his lips, and poured the contents into his mouth much against his own will, for it proved to be a nauseous mixture of honey, barley-water, and extract of tar.

“ That is not likely to intoxicate any one, I should think,” added Maria, as she removed the cup from the lips of the baron; “ and yet they say I indulge in strong drinks.”

Her determination to overcome every obstacle which might prevent her from fulfilling her theatrical engagements, was another strong point in her character. To such an excess did she carry this determination, that she has been considered mad by several who were not well acquainted with her eccentric feelings.

On one occasion, after having dined at three o’clock, (as she usually did when she had to perform,) De Beriot was sitting at table with several friends, waiting till she was ready to proceed to the theatre, when, about six o’clock, she entered the room with an air of disappointment.

“ What ails you, Maria?” inquired her husband.

“ I have got a dreadful sore-throat,” she

replied, "and am so hoarse I can't sing a note."

"Never mind—think nothing of it. Be calm; agitation will only make it worse."

"No, I must try some remedy. Ah! I see something that will do me good;" and before De Beriot had time to arrest her arm, she had seized the mustard-pot, and swallowed the whole of its contents.

Of the charge of avarice I think those who have read the foregoing pages will acquit her. She was far from extravagant—she spent little or nothing upon herself; but to relieve the distressed, or share her purse with the needy, Maria Malibran was ever ready.

Her manners, though gay, were irreproachable. She delighted in what is called fun, yet she never suffered the slightest liberty to be taken with her. Those who knew her never ventured even a "*double entendre*" in her presence. She abhorred everything approaching to gross-

ness, and, in the midst of her greatest hilarity, a single word verging on impropriety would recall her to the most serious mood.

Her *liaison* with De Beriot she looked upon as a marriage, though the law lingered ere it confirmed the fact by pronouncing a divorce from M. Malibran, whom she regarded merely as her nominal husband; and she frequently compared her first marriage to that of Esmeralda with the poet Gringoire in *Notre Dame de Paris*.

Her vivacity was almost superhuman. Frequently, on coming home from the theatre, she would begin dancing about, jumping over chairs, and playing all sorts of antics. When De Beriot endeavoured to dissuade her from these childish pranks, her answer was (like everything else she did) strange and original: "My dear Charles, you don't understand my nature. I cannot take premeditated repose; it can only come when I am compelled by exertion to have recourse to it. I cannot economise my strength

—I use it just as it comes. When I try to restrain my flow of spirits, I feel as if I should be suffocated."

## CHAPTER XLII.

Subterraneous vaults—Madame Malibran's inspection of them—Her pretended dream—She leaves Roissy to fulfil her engagements in England—Proceeds to Manchester—Her extraordinary state of excitement—Lablache—Rehearsal in the church—Effect of the organ on Madame Malibran—Hysterical fits—The duo in Andronico.

DURING her stay at Roissy, some workmen, whilst digging in her garden, discovered a range of vaults several feet below the surface of the earth. This naturally excited the curiosity of all the inmates of the château, and on the instant a party was formed to inspect the subterraneous vaults. Maria entreated most strenuously to be allowed to accompany them, but De Beriot firmly refused to allow her; the con-

sequence was, she was left at home, and on the return of the company she was in an ill humour, and retired early to rest.

At five o'clock next morning she rose, and having put on a light robe de chambre, stole out of the house unperceived by any one. She went straight to the cottage of one of the labourers who had discovered the caves, and having got some persons to accompany her, descended and examined the subterranean chambers. This done, she returned privately to the château, and appeared at the breakfast-table as if nothing had happened. At dinner she pretended she had had a strange dream, during which she imagined herself in the vaults, and proceeded to describe them so accurately that every one was amazed. It was not until many days after that she gave a clue to the mystery.

Towards the end of September, Madame Malibran quitted Roissy for England, where she was anxiously looked for. She proceeded

almost immediately to Manchester, where she took up her abode in the same hotel as Lablache, for whom she felt a sincere friendship. Notwithstanding her alarming state of health, she determined to fulfil her engagements at the music-meetings and concerts, as she had agreed some time before.

On the evening of her arrival at Manchester, she was unusually gay; she played and sang for several hours, and wished Lablache to tell her which he liked best of her two last romances, "The Brigand," or "Death."

When she began the latter, her excitement was extraordinary. She became painfully agitated. Her powers so wonderfully developed themselves on this occasion, that Lablache became absolutely alarmed, and begged of De Beriot to make her retire to rest: this she did, after many entreaties.

Next day she attended rehearsal at the church, but no sooner did she hear the organ than she burst into tears: this was not looked upon as

anything strange, she being continually subject to nervous attacks. On the day following she attended to take part in the oratorio about to be performed in the church; but no sooner did the notes of the organ again strike on her ear than she burst into an uncontrollable fit of laughter, and was carried out fainting. She soon recovered, when she came back and sang with the greatest effect an air by Cimarosa.

In the evening she insisted on singing at the theatre, and got through her task without apparent fatigue. The following day she again attempted to assist at the oratorio, but was carried out of the church in a state of insensibility, which continued for several hours. She recovered in time to perform again at the theatre, where, in spite of every opposition, she insisted on going. There, like a beautiful spectre, she again presented herself. Her personal appearance on this occasion bore the impress of sickness; her countenance bespoke suffering and melancholy, but never was her

voice finer or more powerful. In the duet from Andronico, which she sang with Madame Caradori, she was highly applauded.

The acclamations of thousands rang in her ears, as, overcome by exertion, she tottered from the orchestra; but when the cries of "*encore*" mingled with these cheers, her whole strength appeared to return. A new life seemed to animate her; she drew herself up to her full height, her eye suddenly kindled with triumph, and once more returning, she gracefully acknowledged the compliment. She sang the duet a second time; but from the theatre she was carried to her deathbed.

## CHAPTER XLIII.

Alarming condition of Madame Malibran—Convulsion fits—Proposal to bleed her—Alleged error in the mode of medical treatment—Sensation excited by Madame Malibran's illness—Her anxious inquiries requesting De Beriot's performance—Her last words—Dispute respecting her remains—Chapel erected to her memory at Lacken.

SCARCELY had she reached her hotel, when she was attacked by violent convulsions. A medical gentleman was sent for, who, on his arrival, wished to have her bled. Several of her friends opposed this, but the doctor insisted on it; and De Beriot being at that moment engaged in his professional duties at the concert, there was no one present who could interpose any autho-

rity as to the mode of treating the patient. Madame Malibran, who for a moment recovered her consciousness, said, "Let the doctor do as he wishes; it signifies but little now." She was accordingly bled. It has been alleged, though I believe erroneously, that this bleeding caused her death. It was certainly not judicious, but it could be of little consequence at that period. Had she been bled immediately after her fall from her horse, the probability is, that her life would have been preserved; but when the doctor was called in at Manchester, there appeared no ground for believing that any human skill could have preserved her.

The alarming illness of Madame Malibran caused the greatest sensation in Manchester. Every person of respectability called to inquire after her. The door of the hotel at which she resided was beset by an anxious crowd. The newspapers gave daily bulletins of the state of her health, and some hopes were for a time entertained of her ultimate recovery; but, alas!

her malady made awful strides. In two or three days all pain had left her, and she fell into a kind of stupor. For hours she lay without showing signs of life; once only did she again appear conscious of the passing scene, when, speaking with difficulty, she asked, "How De Beriot had played? whether he had been much applauded?" On being assured of his success, she smiled, sank back on her pillow, and never again spoke. Her soul fled without a sigh, without a struggle:—not a groan, not a start, accompanied her parting breath. For several minutes she had ceased to exist, ere those around her couch were aware of the fact.

The committee appointed for conducting the Manchester musical festival wished to pay De Beriot the full amount of his wife's engagement, though she had only performed twice. This he refused.

The disputes about the burial of her remains, and the anxiety of the people of Manchester to

possess the sacred relic, prove how much they esteemed her. The subsequent exhumation, and other circumstances, are too well known to require further comment.

A chapel is about to be erected over her tomb at Lacken, and her bust is to be placed in it. At that sacred shrine let her admirers devoutly kneel, and, while offering up a prayer, let them recal, as a beautiful dream, the tones of the once idolised Malibran !

END OF VOL I.

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**SECOND MEMOIR.**

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MEMOIRS  
OF  
MADAME MALIBRAN,

BY  
THE COUNTESS DE MERLIN,  
AND OTHER INTIMATE FRIENDS.

WITH A  
SELECTION FROM HER CORRESPONDENCE,  
AND NOTICES OF THE  
PROGRESS OF THE MUSICAL DRAMA  
IN ENGLAND.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

LONDON:  
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## SECOND MEMOIR.

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### CHAPTER I.

Early years of Maria Garcia—Character and accomplishments—Voice—Departure for New York—Reception and success of the Italian Opera in New York—Maria's marriage—Failure of her husband—Reappearance on the stage—Departure for Europe.

MARIA FELICIA was the eldest daughter of Manuel and Joaquina Garcia, and was born at Paris on the 24th of March, 1808. At the age of eight years she was brought over to this country, where she continued without intermission for nearly nine years.

From her earliest girlhood she gave tokens of her future excellence: her gaiety, the vivacity of her impressions, her warmth of feeling, her generous temperament, were innate manifestations of a being enriched with all those graces, qualities, virtues, and accomplishments, in which she afterwards, and at a more matured period, excelled; for though known to the public only for her supereminent powers as a musician, she was in private life equally appreciated for her amiable disposition and mental acquirements. Like most persons adorned by the greatness of their endowments, she was, in her earlier youth, diffident of her own powers. Her genius was an impetus, more than an inclination; but it was an impetus controlled by a desire to deserve the praises she received, as well as to imitate the perfections of the best; and this feeling led her to aspire to an excellence even beyond the pale of mere ordinary mortality.

At the early age of sixteen, her voice had

acquired so much power, both as to intonation and execution, that she appeared at the King's Theatre in the part of Rosina in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*. She subsequently performed Felicia, in Meyerbeer's *Crociato in Egitto*, to Velluti's *Armando*: her performances were eminently successful, and were consequently received as the index of future excellence. In the autumn of the same year she appeared with an increased credit to herself at the York Festival, where she sang, among other pieces, "Rejoice greatly," in the *Messiah*, and "Una voce poco fa." But the gem on that occasion was the "Alma invitta," from Rossini's *Sigismondo*.

Maria's voice was a rich contralto, possessing all the qualities of a soprano. Her intonation was perfect. Hers was, in fact, a persuasive voice, that bent us to its wish, and realised the sentiment of the poet equally with the feelings of the audience. "She could," says a talented writer, "like the singers of ancient days, transport the mind into sublimity, infuse

the spirit of benevolence, inspire divine energy, arouse the slumbering conscience, restore social sympathies, regulate moral feelings, restrain the fury of ambition, unlock the iron grasp of avarice, expand the liberal palm to deeds of charity, breathe the sacred love of peace into the bosom of the turbulent, and the mild spirit of forbearance and toleration into persecuting bigotry and prejudice."\* Her decorations, we may add, resembled the natural inflections of the nightingale, or the warblings of zephyrs upon an *Æolian* harp; yet never unadapted to the nature of the melody, or the genius of the composition.

† In the winter of 1825, Manuel Garcia having assembled a company for the purpose of opening an Italian opera at New York, carried his daughter from the scene of her early triumph. Having crossed the Atlantic, she, like another Columbus, sought to explore a new region, untrodden as yet by the Graces or the Muses.

\* Mr. I. Nathan.

Young, ardent, and intrepid, she seemed to be endowed with the spirit of the first discoverer of that long hidden world. But it is too often to be observed that the first undertakers of a new enterprise are generally the only persons who are unfortunate in their experiments; they waste their energies and their strength in overcoming a difficulty, of which those who are destined immediately to follow, reap the fruit and the advantage. The trials, the difficulties of Columbus, the noblest and the gentlest of men, were rewarded with the laurels of honour and applause; but the leaves soon dropped from his brow, withered by the blast of calumny, and darkened by the vapours of detraction, till the favours of the multitude were at length turned into hate. He who performed everything, encountered everything, suffered everything, was supplanted, vilified, and traduced, and finally overwhelmed.

The comparison is perhaps incorrect, as refers to the professional enterprise of Malibran. She

had no enemies ; but was nevertheless destined, in place of reaping the due reward of her perseverance, to pass through one long-continued scene of mortification and disaster ; her talents, comparatively speaking, unrewarded,—the affairs of her family sinking into confusion,—and, to conclude the catalogue of her misfortunes, her marriage unfortunate, as, in obedience to their wish, she gave a hand, we fear, without a heart, to François Eugene Malibran.

Strange to say, the only opera of the New World, supported as it was by the unremitting exertions of Mademoiselle Garcia, the known abilities of her father, together with the assistance of a very efficient company, failed in procuring an adequate remuneration for even the outlay attendant upon an establishment of the kind. New York, which ranks next to London as to intelligence, commerce, and resources, could not, or would not, retain the prize that had been offered to it in the superior genius of Malibran. After many struggles, the

finances of the Corps Operatique fell into confusion, and it was finally dissolved.

Nevertheless, the youthful debutante found friends in that country; and we may quote, from no unworthy authority, the opinion of the intellectual class of the Americans:—"The whole success of the opera rested upon the exertions of Mademoiselle Garcia, a host in herself. Her talents were appreciated by the transatlantic dilettanti. She was idolised, and to this day her vocal powers stand pre-eminently exalted in their estimation."\*

It was in the midst of these disheartening and distressing circumstances that M. Eugene Malibran sued for and obtained the hand of the accomplished exile of more genial countries. There is a current that sometimes runs against us, which it is in vain to attempt to oppose or resist. It is the tide not leading on to fortune.

Not long after her marriage, fresh misfortunes

\* Mr. I. Nathan.

occurred. Eugene Malibran became a bankrupt, the inhabitant of a jail. This passage in Madame Malibran's short and brilliant career, though darkened by the predominance of so many sad and depressing circumstances, forms nevertheless an epoch in her life, of which, but for these very same calamities, we should have as yet known nothing. This unfortunate era of her life reveals to our view this amiable woman exerting her talents with undiminished ardour to liquidate the debts that were not of her own contracting, and giving up even her marriage settlement to the creditors of her husband. We here, in fact, behold the successful *débutante*, without a murmur, exerting all her energies, all her faculties, in behalf and for the benefit of a man whom she once trusted as the being the most capable of sheltering her from the storms and troubles of sublunary vicissitudes.

To complete her misfortunes, her efforts on the bleak stage of the American hemisphere, on which, after her husband's bankruptcy, she

appeared in English characters, were but indifferently repaid; so that her health, her youth, her grace, her beauty, and her genius, were alike sacrificed, since altogether united they availed her nothing. From this consideration, it was at last resolved upon by her family that she should return to Europe.

## CHAPTER II.

Malibran's arrival in Paris (1827)—Makes her *début* in *Semiramide*—Success—Desdemona—Italian opera in London (1829)—Ancient Concerts—Chester Festival—Gloucester—Appears in *Susannah* at Covent Garden—Reappearance in Paris—Ancient Concerts in London (1830)—*Fidalma*—*La Cenerentola*—*Orazzi*—Liverpool Festival—Paris (1831)—Bologna (1832.)

IN 1827, therefore, the unhappy Malibran returned to Europe, from which she had in an evil day departed, and once more took her station amidst the accomplished circles which, enraptured with genius, hailed her return with delight.

She arrived in Paris totally alone and un-

provided for. She was received by her husband's sister.

She shortly after made her appearance, for the first time before a Parisian audience, in the part of Semiramide. A timidity, too often the accompaniment of superior talent, interrupted her for a moment in the difficult passage, "Tremal tempo;" but rallying her powers, she concluded the performance amidst the plaudits of an audience predetermined to criticise, and previously impressed with the meritorious abilities of singers equally gifted with herself. The intellect, so superior to the mere merits of a cantatrice, was soon felt. Her pleasing, varied, and astonishing dramatic talent, her grace, and the vividness of all her impersonations, proved irresistible assistants to the melodious power of song, and Malibran was triumphant! A French critic, describing her first appearance in Semiramide, says: "If Madam Malibran *must* yield the palm to Pasta in point of acting, she possesses a marked superiority in respect to singing."

In the same season her performance of Desdemona created a strong sensation, from her deep feeling and fine acting. This was in her nineteenth year, and when the performance of Pasta was fresh in the recollection of the audience. In February 1829, Madame Malibran and Mademoiselle Sontag appeared for the first time together.

Her next engagement was at our own Italian Opera, where she appeared on the 21st of March, 1829, in the character of Desdemona. Her range of characters at this period were Rosina, Semiramide, Romeo, Tancredi, Ninetta, and Zerlina.

On the 25th of April, in the same season, she sang her first song at the Ancient Concerts. She was engaged at the Chester Festival of 1829, when she sang, "O had I Jubal's lyre," "Praise the Lord," and "Rejoice greatly;" which pieces, from her not yet having made herself sufficiently acquainted with the style of Handel, were pronounced at the time to be unsuccessful efforts. In the "Deh parlati" of Cimarosa, she is

described as exhibiting the very triumph of profound and touching expression. At the Gloucester Meeting, in September, she sang the "Ombra Adorata" from Zingarelli's Romeo, and at Birmingham, in the following month, she shone forth in great power. The old musicians said that Handel's "Holy holy" had never been so finely sung since the days of Mara. Who that heard can forget her *last* singing of it? Here, too, she sang for the first time the "Non piu di fiori" of Mozart, Willman accompanying.

Previous to her Birmingham engagement, she had volunteered her gratuitous services for the benefit of the proprietors of Covent Garden Theatre, then in a state approaching to bankruptcy; and made her first appearance in London in an English part, as Susannah in the Marriage of Figaro.

In the winter of 1829 she made her reappearance in Paris, in the part of Ninetta in La Gazza Ladra; and in the following January

she assisted at the benefit of Sontag, in the character of Tancredi.

On the 28th of April, 1830, she reappeared at our Ancient Concerts, when she sang the "Ombra Adorata," the duetto from Cimarosa's "Gli Orazzi," "I venami omai," with Donzelli, and the "Placido è il mar," from the Idomeneo. At the last concert of that season, May 5, 1830, she sang the "Holy holy," "Non piu di fiori," and the duet, "Deh prendi," from the same opera (La Clemenza.) At the sixth Philharmonic Concert, May 17, she repeated the "Non piu di fiori," and sang, with Mr. H. Phillips, "Bell Imago" from the Semiramide.

It is a credit to our English audiences that they always appreciated the very perfect air from La Clemenza. We remember upon one occasion, when our national taste in music was being depreciated in Malibran's hearing, that she, in her own animated way, undertook to defend us on that score, and ended by saying, "That she never sang such a proportion of

classical music in any country throughout Europe as she did in England." If we wanted a proof of the unenvious character of her disposition, we should find it in the gratification she ever expressed towards Willman for the execution of those lovely passages for the "Corne di bassetto," and which performance, so full of soul, so exquisite in expression, *she felt* entitled him to a very large proportion of the applause bestowed upon the singer.

On the 13th of March she played Fidalma for two or three nights, upon the celebrated first appearance of Lablache in this country. Her descending run of the double octave in the trio, "Lei faccio un inchino," electrified the audience. On the 29th of April she appeared in a part unworthy of her talents—Angelina in La Cenerentola. At the ninth Ancient Concert of 1830, May 12, she introduced the song, "Il caro ben," from Sacchini's Perseo. In the same month, Gli Orazzi e Curiazzi, (Cimarosa) was revived, and our heroine appeared as Orazzia

The performance was distinguished by the grandest efforts, both in singing and acting, particularly in her last scene, where she denounces her brother for having slain her lover. At the Worcester Festival, which took place on the 14th, 15th, and 16th of September, and the Norwich on the 21st, 22nd, 23rd, and 24th of the same month, she was engaged.

At the Liverpool Festival, October the 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th, she performed, among other pieces, the "Gratias agimus," with Willman, the "O Salutaris" of Cherubino, and, with Mrs. Knyvett, Marcello's psalm, "Qual annilante." The last time she sang this duet was at Manchester, with her favourite, Clara Novello, when the audience could scarcely be restrained by the sacredness of the place in which it was performed, from an open demonstration of applause.

After the conclusion of the three festivals this year, Malibran returned to Paris, and again met with a most flattering reception in the part of Desdemona.

In September, 1831, the opera season again commenced in Paris. In the intermediate period Madame Malibran remained in seclusion. But in December we find her again upon the Parisian theatre, having succeeded Pasta. *La Gazza Ladra* was the opera selected for the occasion. Soon after this effort, she was compelled by indisposition to withdraw for some time from the stage.

In the autumn, 1832, we find her concluding an engagement at the theatre at Bologna, where she was to perform for eighteen nights.

## CHAPTER III.

The Corinne of Madame de Staël, the prototype of Malibran—  
Malibran in Rome—at Milan—English and Italians com-  
pared—Venice—Teatro Garcia.

IT is now six-and-thirty years since the world  
were favoured with the Corinne of De Staël.  
More near to our own time—nay, as it were but  
yesterday—we behold in Madame Malibran the  
Corinne of the past repeated in the present.  
The illustrious daughter of M. Necker knew  
not that the favourite creation of her genius was  
to be in reality personified. She knew not that  
the inspirations of her muse were to be, and at

no far distant period, renewed, revived, and embodied. Corinne crowned at the capitol was but a prelude to Malibran crowned with the acclamations of Europe.

But there are other points of resemblance. Corinne was celebrated for the charms of her voice, for her dramatic powers, for the wonderful capabilities of her genius, and, above all, for her simplicity of disposition, her generosity, and her benevolence. The Corinne to whom the senators of Rome awarded the crown of laurels, emblematic of the triumphs of genius developed in a woman, was but in part the offspring of that country so prolific in its mental productions. Born, nevertheless, in that same fertile soil, having exhaled the fragrance of its air and its perfume, having partaken of that sentiment which a climate peculiarly grateful and indulgent confers, she was almost in every respect an Italian. Madame Malibran was a daughter of a climate scarcely inferior, and from both parents inherited the enthusiasm

which distinguishes their more accomplished inhabitants.

The comparison goes still farther; the Corinne of the capitol, overwhelmed by her misfortunes, perished in the meridian of her charms: Madame Malibran expired in the 28th year of her age, after a youth fertile in mortifications and disasters.

It was in the spring of 1832 that Malibran, the Corinne of our modern days, made her appearance in Rome.

This city, called eternal, is but the faded monument of past successes, or rather but a solitary mourner over the peopled dead. The stupendous galleries of the Coliseum remain as emblems of the past, but their aspect is that of awful and fearful desolation. It is by our impressions only that we are to judge of remnants so magnificent, and so tremendous in their proportions, yet fitted, like the Pyramids, to resist, for centuries to come, the withering hand of unsparing Time.

Amidst this ruin, this desolation, a gentle voice is heard, an immortal spirit breathes, and the melody of song is felt to vibrate on the ear, and the songstress is worthy of the glories of the past! The recitative, as delivered by Malibran, was admirably calculated to re-awaken the glorious conceptions of past ages, in a people much attached to their ancient name, and whose genius stoops only to the necessity of circumstances. The fame of Malibran corresponded but too well with the illusions of the past; and the Romans crowded around her, as one in every way dear to them, and worthy of their praises. The triumphs of applause, of an applause so connected with the sympathies of the Romans, had not, however, in any way spoiled the simplicity of her disposition, or in any way affected the goodness of her heart; and it was in the midst of praises, honours, and caresses, that she gave a concert for the benefit of a family in a state of indigence, which was only one of innumerable instances of private

benevolence which characterised her sojourn at Rome.

We now turn to her celebrated *début* in the character of Norma, at Milan. "The excitement of her auditors," writes a friend, "was extraordinary; each time she quitted the stage, she was required to reappear, to receive fresh applause; and the authority of the police was necessarily resorted to to quell the tumult, which, however, only subsided on the interposition of the chief authorities of the city."

It was here that a medal in honour of her excelling talents was struck by the sculptor Valerio Nesti, bearing her likeness, with the motto on the reverse, "Per universale consenso proclamata mirabile nell' ayvone e nelli canto." Thus the modern Corinne, reappearing once more amongst the lively and enthusiastic Milanese, reawakened all their admiration; nay, more, fulfilled all their expectations of delight.

The English possess more vigour of character than the inhabitants of the south ; which is in part the result of their physical constitution, unsubdued by the mild influences of a clime which seems that of a perpetual summer ; but this same physical vigour acting for a time upon the more inward faculties of the mind becomes soon exhausted, and is at any time little fitted for the expression of enthusiasm. But amidst the warm, the genial, the softening climates of the south, the case is diametrically opposite. Thus, while in England the ranks of the noblesse, with marble coldness, scarcely condescend to give the slightest token of applause, in Italy all participate in a general and equally felt enthusiasm.

The feeling of love, admiration, and respect, with which Madame Malibran was received, was therefore participated in by all ranks universally.

It was here, also, that the Duke Visconti offered her 420,000 francs, (£17,500) for

one hundred and eighty performances, distributed over five seasons, with apartments, carriage, table, &c. The enthusiasm throughout the whole of Italy had risen to such a degree, that even these terms, liberal as they appear to us, were not considered to be overmuch, coupled as they were with other advantages, such as a free benefit, &c.

The principal cities and capitals of Europe were eager to have her among them. Their rivalry, which had the agreeable advantage of being without hate, was exerted as it were in unison ; for each party could understand, and at once enter into, the feelings of the other ; but she had promised the Venetians ; and though the liberality of her disposition might make the acquisition of money a matter of importance, she had never accustomed herself to the subterfuge of avoiding one engagement for the sake of another.

Venice—a city like the ruins of more ancient Rome—Venice had petitioned for her presence—

she too, another Rome, reduced to a state of indigence and melancholy: she too was, however, to be enlivened and delighted with the melody of the queen of song. That city, once the favoured, but now the deserted daughter of the sea—that city of the gondolier chanting his chorus from the verses of Tasso and of Dante, like the plaint that could still lament in tender accents over the decay of her grandeur—that city beautiful in its solitude, beheld, in the subject of this memoir, a being eminently calculated to awaken its sympathies, and to revive the memory of her former power. Malibran and the Venetians were well met, for they, like the Milanese and the Neapolitans, give up their whole souls at once to the influence of their imaginations; and admiration in them is ever a sensation too importunate to be resisted. The instances of love and of respect which Madame Malibran received from all ranks at Venice are too numerous to repeat. Her public performances at Venice were completed

in their finale by her repetition of Amina in *La Sonnambula*, and that for the purpose of a charitable action. This intermixture of the kindest virtues, with the astonishing talent displayed in the course of her impersonations, completed the enthusiasm of the Venetians. "She was," writes a friend, "visited by throngs, and the storm of applause lasted a full half hour; a vast multitude afterwards followed her home, and surrounded her residence, where enthusiasm arose almost to infatuation."

This last and final performance in honour of the Venetian people occurred in the Teatro Emerannitio, whose proprietor had entreated her to sing at his theatre for one night, which she at once consented to do, on a stipulation that her performance might be entirely for his own advantage. This theatre is now called 'Teatro Garcia, in honour equally of her goodness and of her talents.

Such was the nature of her affecting farewell

of the Venetians, whom she had intended again  
and again to revisit, but who, alas ! were destined  
to see her no more !

## CHAPTER IV.

Malibran's re-appearance at Naples—at Milan—Return to Paris—Italians and the French compared—Malibran again revisits Italy—Paris—London—*Sonnambula* at Drury Lane—*Fidelio*—Divorce—Marriage with De Beriot—*The Maid of Artois*—Madame de Beriot visits the continent for the last time.

WE now behold Madame Malibran de Beriot in the zenith of her charms, in the meridian, in the splendour of her powers. We behold her as the *prima donna* of the far celebrated theatre, San Carlos, at Naples; the first in size and magnificence in Europe. The Italians have not forgotten, with their supposed political degradation, their enthusiasm. Malibran needed only to

appear to please. She affected the hearts of the Neapolitans; that lively people, so acute, and yet so warm in their impressions. She had become known; in a word, she had become their own. Amidst the torrent of acclamations with which she was continually received, this accomplished woman, when relieved from the fatigue attendant upon a public appearance, displayed, in every action of her domestic life, a goodness, a sincerity, and a generosity of disposition, that must endear her memory to posterity, as much as the more vivid and inspiring recollection of her dramatic performances.

From Naples she progressed to Milan, where the same applause, the same enthusiasm, the same expressions of devotion to her person, were repeated. The instances of admiration and respect which she here received, as at Naples, are too numerous to repeat. Her Neapolitan friends, however, may remain assured that the sentiments they expressed were not obliterated by future successes from her

heart; the meed of praise was offered to an amiable as much as to a talented woman, and it was felt, remembered, and appreciated. Her fame had now spread over the kingdoms of Europe.

The Italian people are jealous only with regard to the object of their private affections; they are not jealous of fame, of talent, of glory, in another. The flattering testimonials contained in the papers of the day might be the result of favour from a party who felt interested in her success; but the fame of Malibran penetrated into remote provinces out of the reach, for the most part, of those flattering testimonials. It was through the influence of private letters, containing the unbiassed statements of individuals, that the fame of Malibran was so widely disseminated. Amidst the tumult of universal and most deserved applause, it was with profound grief that the Milanese and Neapolitans saw her depart.

The scene of her celebrity now again opens

in Paris, the ancient capital of Charlemagne, of Pepin, of the Capetian Kings, of Napoleon, the city of the Louvre, the emporium of fashion, and the brilliant focus of all modern society;—Paris, which occupies a place in the map of Europe, much more central than any of the cities contained within the circle of the Italian states, is consequently of easier access to the inhabitants of most European countries; its political importance, its situation, and its numerous population, together with its boundless sources of public amusement, all combine to assemble great multitudes from every other nation in the world.

Amidst this radii, the modern Corinne now once again appeared. The performance chosen for her *début* was Semiramide. The subsequent performances were the Barbiere di Seviglia, Otello, and the Romeo e Giulietta, of Zingarelli. The sentiment of the Italians often engenders a deep-rooted and impassioned enthusiasm; the vivacity of the French gives

birth to expressions of enthusiasm, not less sincere for the time, and not less impaioned. Their volubility must have a vent. In lauding the talents of another, they fancy themselves identified with the applauses contained in their own approbation. The Parisians, however, were, to our personal knowledge, perfectly sincere in their admiration of the brilliant talents of Malibran.

Malibran now re-appeared at the celebrated theatre San Carlos, at Naples. She had, upon a former time, awakened all the enthusiasm of that lively people, and it suffered no diminution. Her powers, still reaching on towards further maturity, and the excellence of her private character, ever adorned as it was with innumerable instances of goodness and generosity, rendered indeed forgetfulness on their parts impossible. We need not here weary the reader with the repetition of new triumphs; we shall rather state that Malibran's chief satisfaction at this time consisted in witnessing

the progress of her accomplished sister, Mademoiselle Garcia, who appeared with her in Pacini's opera of Irene.

At this period in the career of Madame Malibran, the fame of her talents and the generosity of her conduct, in all matters of ordinary life, had exalted her so much in the eyes of Europe, that nations contested with one another for the honour of having her amongst them. It was her nature, however, not to become what is usually termed spoiled; she displayed no affectations, no unworthy prejudices, no undue preferences of one set of people at the expense of another. Hence, in order to meet the desires of the different inhabitants of those countries whose capital cities lay remote and apart from each other, vast distances were to be overcome, and immense journeys were to be performed. But these various occasions for physical exertion were, perhaps, not unsuited to the vivacity of her temperament and the natural activity of her disposition. She is

therefore to be traced much in the same manner as a meteor which blazes across the heavens, shedding around the most brilliant irradiations; and, as the beholders still continued to gaze, suddenly departing to appear within the circle of a new zenith, yet again re-appearing with renewed splendour, and with rays still more dazzlingly diffused.

From this period, therefore, the Corinne of our times must be followed throughout her rapid and irregular course, after a manner that may correspond with the celerity and the rapidity of her movements. Nor shall we enumerate her various impersonations, nor repeat at large the expressions of enthusiasm everywhere displayed in her favour.

From Naples Madame Malibran proceeded to Paris, where, to descend to the language of mercenary computation, immense profits were added to those general expressions of applause at all times increasing. From Paris she proceeded to London, where, on the 13th of May,

1835, she undertook the English version of *La Sonnambula*, at Covent Garden Theatre.

This performance created a great "sensation" in the dramatic world, which extended to all classes, all ranks, all professions. "On her entrance," says a contemporary, "her reception was completely electrifying;" the whole audience rising *en masse*, with deafening shouts and cheers, to encourage her in her new and arduous attempt. The manner in which she acquitted herself can never be forgotten by those who witnessed a performance, the complete success of which has induced so many untiring repetitions. Her performance was one in which it was difficult to say which was most admirable, the finished excellence of her vocalisation, or the natural beauty of her acting.

The impersonation of *Fidelio* succeeded to this *chef d'œuvre* in the dramatic art, and her united and transcendent merits as an actress and as a singer placed her now on the very pinnacle of fame.

During this brilliant season. Malibran appeared also at numerous parties amongst the *élite* of the *noblesse*, the mere enumeration of whose names only could give the reader any idea of the general industry of her life, and of the multiplicity and importance of her various performances.

In the autumn of the same year she was again at Naples; and again, in 1836, she appeared in Paris.

It was in the spring of this year that her unfortunate union with Monsieur Malibran was dissolved in due form by the courts of Paris; and in the month of March, in the same year, she married Monsieur de Beriot, to whom she had been long ardently attached, and by whom she had had several children.

On this occasion the Queen of the French presented her with a magnificent agraffe, richly adorned with pearls. There was wanting no better testimony of the respect in which she was universally held by the court of France.

On the 2nd of May following, Madame Malibran, of late more popularly known as Madame Malibran de Beriot, re-commenced her English performances at Drury Lane Theatre. On the 27th of the same month, she appeared in the new character of Isolina, in Balfé's opera of the Maid of Artois. Of this performance we shall only say that it is of too recent occurrence for any one to forget the united charms of melody, sweetness, and harmony, with which she enriched a composition of itself beautiful and pleasing.

At the close of this season she proceeded to her chateau at Ixelles, near Brussels, where, after recovering her fatigue, she progressed to various capital cities, satisfying, like the prophets of old, the hitherto ignorant multitudes who till now had only heard, through means of distant rumour or report, of her resplendent abilities.

It is seldom that expectation is gratified; and a celebrated authoress has defined only two

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objects which are likely to surpass the comprehensions of a modern, and consequently an enlightened, imagination; namely, St. Peter's at Rome, and the ocean. All individual wonder was to be reckoned disappointed in whatever related to personal excellence. But Malibran was an exception even to this fastidious rule. The metaphysicians of Germany, equally with the musical dilettanti, expressed their satisfaction at her performances, in a manner that proved at once that they had not been disappointed. At Aix-la-Chapelle, such was the respect shown to her moral character in conjunction with her brilliant talent, that the military honours generally reserved for the salutation of royal personages were upon this occasion accorded to her.

Up to this period have we then traced the public career of Malibran, in reference to the scenic characters of the drama. But a gulf yawns before us ! We approach the verge of the dread abyss of time and of eternity !—for Mali-

bran is about to return once more to England, and to appear for the last time ! She is about to perish in the zenith, in the perfection of her fame ; yet, though so young, her destiny was nevertheless accomplished !

We shall therefore go back to that portion of her history which relates to her oratorio performances ; for she excelled in the sublimities of sacred composition as much as in the more varied science of the stage.

## CHAPTER V.

Oratorios—York Festival—Malibran's great success—Opinions of the press—Spectator—Atlas—Athenæum.

WE have run through the histrionic career of Malibran, and may now revert to a species of performance which developed the disposition of her mind much more distinctly than even her brilliant and faithful impersonations of the characters of the drama; we allude to her inspired eloquence in the delivery of sacred music.

The most brilliant talents, the most captivating graces, the most tuneful melody, were

dignified, and indeed exalted, in Malibran by a deep sense of religious devotion; since a religious belief, and a fixed undeviating principle of rectitude, formed her character, adorned the simplicity of her domestic avocations, and, indeed, accompanied her through all the varied scenes of her career. Undeviating rectitude of conduct was perhaps to be expected in a woman of superior understanding; but when we find a person still in her youth so much praised, caressed, and flattered, seeking happiness and consolation in religious meditations, our admiration becomes lost in our respect. Her personal friends, and one perhaps beyond all others, can affirm to her piety; and perhaps mutual sentiments, sympathies, and opinions, which had their foundation, not in the tumult of public applause, but in a sense of virtue, goodness, and true religion, constituted the bond of a union extremely happy to both, and only broken by that which arrests all friend-

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ships, by dissolving life itself, though the hope may remain that again they shall be united.

That Malibran, with a mind thus, as it were, sublimely imbued, should give an almost beautified expression to sacred music, will not appear so surprising, though it doubtless must have excited the astonishment of those who were acquainted with her only through the medium of the theatre.

It was as early as the year 1825, and at the age of scarcely seventeen years, that Malibran, as Mademoiselle Garcia, appeared at the York Festival. She had indeed become a general favourite of the public in consequence of her successful *début* the previous season at the King's Theatre. But oratorio singing is a trial far more difficult than that at the theatre; the decorations, the dresses, nay even the encouraging plaudits of the audience, being wanting; and the utmost musical ability may fail if unsupported by a powerful as well as a re-

ligious conception of the nature, and, above all, of the intention of a sacred performance. These considerations, in fact, weighed so far with the best judges in such matters, as to inspire in them a doubt as to her success—at least in a comparative point of view with her other performances.

These doubts and uncertainties, however, were quickly dissipated by her unequalled singing in the *Messiah*, and the ease with which she exchanged the compositions of Rossini and Mozart for those of Handel and Haydn. The execution of the air, “*Rejoice greatly*,” created a very powerful sensation. Her auditors were greatly struck with the “splendid power\* and elevation of sentiment expressed in her singing; and again, in the *Creation*, she gave the air “*On mighty Pens*,” with a degree of brilliancy, delicacy, and sweetness, which she alone, say our contemporaries, had been able to impart to that exquisite composition.

We need not repeat the catalogue of her

oratorio performances: to do so, indeed, would be but to multiply expressions of praise and admiration—praises which cannot increase the sense of delight in those who had the happiness to hear her, and which must at the same time, we fear, prove inadequate for the information of posterity. We shall, however, here insert a few remarks gathered from a source in every way respectable, in order to show that it is not upon our own personal judgment that we have spoken, nor from that of her more intimate friends. The authorities whom we shall quote will speak for themselves; and we can only add that their remarks are chosen for their brevity, not on account of the merit of their approbation, since the passages which we have omitted are equally energetic in the character of their applauses.

“ We have heard,” says the critic of the Spectator, “ singers in years gone by, of whose powers we cherish a vivid and grateful recollection, and we look round among those who are living for some of present excellence and

greater promise ; but in Malibran were united all the powers and capabilities, all the gifts and graces, that were scattered among her predecessors and contemporaries. She had an innate perception of beauty and grace in every art ; we have discoursed with her about pictures and architecture, about the Latin classics, the poetry of Dante and Goëthe, the drama of England, and found a mind not tinged, but impregnated with a love of all that was great and enduring of every country and age."

" Have we not all witnessed," says the *Atlas*, " expression in every form mirrored in her countenance, how lofty in its indignation, how angelic in its tenderness ! Her voice at times appeared supernatural, the tones of a sibyl could not penetrate more deeply."

" We have heard her," says a writer in the *Athenæum*, " in the same evening sing in five different languages, giving with equal truth and character the intense and passionate scene from *Der Freizshutz*, and those sprightly and charm-

ing Provençal airs, many of which were composed by herself. The extensive compass of her voice enabled her to command the whole range of songs when is usually divided between the contralto and the soprano. She was, it is true, often hurried away by the tameless vivacity of her spirits into flights and cadences which were more eccentric than beautiful. We have heard her, in the very wantonness of consummate power, rival the unvocal Arpigli of De Beriot's violin, and execute the most sudden shakes and divisions upon those highest and deepest notes of the voice, which less perfectly trained singers approach warily and with preparation. But those knew little of the dignity Malibran could assume, or of the unexaggerated expression which she could throw into music, even the plainest and least fantastic, who are not familiar with her oratorio performances, with the earnest pathos of her *scena 'Deh parlaté'*, Cimarosa's noblest song, with the calm and holy sweetness of her *Pastorelle* from the *Messiah*, 'He shall

feed his flock ;' or, in a strain loftier than these, with her delivery of that most magnificent of recitatives, ' Sing ye unto the Lord,' from *Israel in Egypt*. In this last she so completely identified herself with the spirit of the scene, that no painter of *Miriam the Prophetess* ever dreamed of face, form, or attitude, more appropriate, more instinct with sublime triumph, than hers at that moment."

## CHAPTER VI.

**Private life of Madame Malibran—Her genius—Early perfect developement of her powers—Her perception of national character—Her Desdemona in Paris—Her accomplishments—Her freedom from professional envy and jealousy.**

ATTIRED in the picturesque costume of the drama; walking in an atmosphere of lights, and amidst a scene of splendid decoration; uttering the language of the poet, and warbling the notes of melody and song, Malibran de Beriot appears as an enchantress elevated beyond the attributes of human nature, and exempt, as it were, from its miseries and necessities. But

let us visit her in her private character; let us observe her in the comparative solitude of domestic retirement;—let us quit the syren of the stage, and turn to observe the woman in all the simplicity of her nature,—and we shall find the cantatrice equally accomplished in the virtues, as she was in the talents, of her sex. The author has had, as much as any one, the opportunity of seeing her in the tranquillity of private life; and while he confirms those anecdotes of her benevolence, which her friends have already given to the public, he will also be able to add some equally authentic details connected with the goodness of her heart.

The genius of Malibran may indeed fill every reflecting mind with astonishment, since she seems to have anticipated time, and to have arrived at a degree of eminence to which few even of the most talented ever attain. We have proofs of the transcendent abilities of a De Stael, of a Genlis, of Madame Cottin, of our own Miss Edgeworth, and many others;

but all these had the advantage of time in perfecting their intellectual acquirements. Had they been arrested in their career at the early age of twenty-eight years, they would probably have left, comparatively speaking, but few marks of their ability. Even the talent of Shakspeare himself was probably but undeveloped at so early an age; and the moral drawn from his immortal comedies and tragedies might have slumbered equally with the passions so skilfully portrayed, had accident so prematurely deprived the world of his genius.

The talent of Malibran had arrived at wonderful perfection; nor was it merely confined to the developement of her professional abilities. She penetrated, at a glance, the genius of the nations amongst whom she happened occasionally to reside;—nay, more, she could adapt herself to their habitual tastes. Her performance of Desdemona in the opera of Otello, in the French capital, is one instance

out of many. She knew the love of effect in a French audience, and, in order to gratify them, altered her acting. In the finale, Desdemona is generally smothered by the Moor ; but Malibran endeavoured in her terror to escape. Expectation was thus prolonged; and to fulfil the horror of the scene, she caused the incensed Othello to draw her towards the front of the stage, and there complete his vengeance.

Malibran was very fond of riding, and was a graceful though not a perfect horsewoman. She had a natural talent for drawing. In public she was serious, distant, and respectful ; in private she was gay and childish. She was charitable, liberal, sincere, warm in her affections, of a most forgiving temper, of exquisite sensibility, unassuming to humility, mild and simple in worldly affairs as a child. She was ever desirous of casting the mantle of love over the failings of others ; and while her kindness was thus extensively manifested to all with whom she had any intercourse, her gratitude to

others, who showed marks of love to her, was unbounded. When her kind friends sent her anything that they thought would be acceptable, it was her study to think how she could return an equal token of affection. Her manners were marked with the simplicity which generally characterises exalted minds; and though she could not be unconscious of the high estimation in which she was held, she was yet untainted with either vanity or pride. Her friendship in weal and woe was fervent, disinterested, and sincere.

That her habits were those of perfect temperance, is to be ascertained from the spontaneous testimony of all those who were constantly in her company; that she felt no hatred, envy, or jealousy, towards her contemporaries, is to be gathered from her willingness at all times to unite with all, and assist those less talented. That she should have ever been termed avaricious, is sufficient to disprove all the rest, since we know that she was impelled,

by the unequalled generosity of her temper, to perform the kindest and most liberal actions. As ostentation formed no part of her character, her deeds of charity were not blazoned forth to the world.

She had a vivacity of fancy, and a strength of intellect, in which few were her superiors. No person could render common incidents more entertaining by the happy art she possessed of relating them: her invention was so fertile, her ideas were so original, and the points of humour so ingeniously and unexpectedly taken up in the progress of her narrative, that she never failed to accomplish all the purposes which the gaiety of her imagination led her to attempt.

We have observed her in different points of view: we have seen her exalted on the dangerous pinnacle of worldly prosperity, surrounded by fawning and flattering friends, and an admiring world. We have seen her marked out by prejudice as an object of dislike. We have seen

her bowed down by bodily pain and weakness ; but never did we see her forget the urbanity of her sex, her conscious dignity as a rational creature, or a fervent aspiration after the highest degree of attainable perfection. We have seen her on the bed of sickness, enduring pain with the patience of a Christian, with the firm belief that the afflictions of this life are but for a moment !

## CHAPTER VII.

Malibran courted by the English aristocracy—The Duchess of St. Albans—Fête at Holly Lodge—the Duchess's presents to Malibran at her last benefit.

THAT Malibran was equally esteemed and beloved in the more select circles of private life, it would be almost superfluous to mention. Nevertheless, as it happens that English society differs in no small degree from Constantinople in manners; in as far as the English are seldom or ever hurried away by what may be rather coarsely termed the intoxication of excitement, and consequently remain aloof and distinct from anything that, however excellent in itself, may

approach to the professional; it is no small honour to the memory of Malibran that we are able to recollect her taking her place amongst the daughters of the richest aristocracy in the world, and becoming the friends of many known for their domestic virtues, talents, and accomplishments.

Malibran was also happy in the friendship of the Duchess of St. Albans. This lady, from the amplitude of her fortune, as much as from the dignity of her rank, had it at all times in her power to distinguish the daughters of genius, of which she was herself, in her earlier years, a very pleasing example. It is too often a consequence of prosperity, that the favoured constellation shines coldly on less fortunate stars; and, as a philosopher has still more sharply remarked, "it is the ill consequence of prosperity never to look behind it." But the Duchess of St. Albans was ever the friend and the benefactress of merit; nay, more, the hospitable and beneficent hostess to those whose

reputation and accomplishments rendered them worthy of her personal acquaintance.

The Duchess's fête at Holly Lodge, on the 11th of July, 1835, remarkable for its taste and magnificence, is no less so also for the presence of Malibran. It commenced with a concert performed in the open air; a novelty not exactly adapted to the capricious nature of our English climate, but perhaps the more to be prized whenever it can be accomplished. Malibran, Grisi, Rubini, Ivanoff, and Lablache, took the head in this mid-day chorus. This brilliant performance was succeeded by an exhibition of morris-dancers attired *à la pastorale*, and in the midst of modern dresses, altered fashions, and the march of intellect, (amongst the visitors,) the company were regaled with the refreshing spectacle of an animated measure tripped in the manner of the "olden time." A *dejeuner dinatoire* followed.

Novelty might now be thought to have done its duty; but the concert, dance, and

banquet was but the prelude to further festivities. The Duke of St. Albans, attired in the costume of his office as Grand Falconer of England, presently led the way, with a sylvan train of foresters and falcons, to a grassy spot, where the amusement of hawking commenced. This sport was succeeded by a concert of national music.

Malibran, as we have already stated, had performed in the previous concert, which was Italian. She, however, again volunteered her services; and perhaps never acquitted herself better than she did in the duet "*Vive le Roi*" with Braham. The entertainment afterwards concluded with a ball. Malibran's dancing kept pace with her other acquirements; and carried away, as it were, with the spirit of the scene, she persuaded Lablache to accompany her in a waltz. Hers was indeed the poetry of motion. She then led off the then first-danced, and rather difficult, Russian Mazurka.

Nothing could exceed the regard felt by

Madame Malibran towards the Duchess of St. Albans ; a feeling which was equally reciprocated on the occasion of her last benefit and appearance in London, the 16th of July, 1838. The Duchess, after the performance, visited her in her dressing-room, and presented her with a flacon, and, by way of souvenir, her embroidered handkerchief. Little did the noble giver think that these very *cadeaux* should, in the space of two short months, be employed to raise her drooping spirits, and wipe the tear of agony from her dying eyes !

## CHAPTER VIII.

**Anecdotes—The Americans—Malibran and the shepherds—  
“Molly put the kettle on”—Presentiment of early death—  
Presentiment of evil—An accident.**

MUCH vivacity of temper is very frequently united to great sensibility of temperament. The fortunes of Malibran were various, and in many respects tragic; but the natural bias of her disposition was at once playful and cheerful, consequently her manners frequently possessed a degree of joyousness that approached to the comic. But those points which tell best in the manners and conversation of the witty, fall dull and languid from the pen of the biographer.

With all her sincere and deep-felt respect for the Americans, she could not help occasionally indulging in raillery at their pet phrases. She "calculated" on returning to them, and with improved fortunes, and a more happy condition of her married life, to show them to what height of importance she had arrived. "I *guess*," she was wont to say, "how *pretty considerably* surprised and delighted they will be to see me again, half a woman and half a nightingale. And as they *calculate* upon me, I think I may safely *reckon* upon them. O yes!"

An excusable, or rather an amiable degree of vanity was mixed with her more serious determination to return to that country. She was now no longer the afflicted wife of a bankrupt, but happily married, and possessed of an independent fortune. In America she had suffered her greatest misfortunes; and it is surely no small proof of her serious love for that country and its people that she should so

very much have desired to revisit them. In fact, she made this favourite intention of hers a frequent subject of conversation.

Exercise on horseback was to her both a relief and a relaxation, and it was one, moreover, in which she excelled. In one of her excursions in the neighbourhood of London, in one of those sequestered lanes which have escaped the building mania, she began humming an air which her companions happened to praise; and as there chanced to be no audience but her own party, she gave the words of the air as she sang it. It was the finale to the *Maid of Artois*. The solitude was, however, speedily dispersed by the arrival of two drovers with a flock of sheep. Instead of rushing through the equestrians, these men stopped, listened, and seemed lost in admiration. This profound, and at the same time perfectly unpremeditated deference to her power of song in the open day, and from persons whose minds were necessarily occupied with matters that had but small

reference to the empire of the muses, was a compliment which Malibran, with her usual quickness, was not slow in appreciating. Here was no orchestra—no scenic representation—no previous enthusiasm—no glitter to excite the feelings—and no enchantment but the chance-sung notes, as it were, of a simple individual. She felt the compliment in every respect to be, as it certainly was, so totally unpremeditated and heartfelt, that she at once declared she felt as much pleased, if not even more so, than upon those grand theatrical occasions when, after a triumphant finale, amidst the blaze of lights, dresses, and a brilliant company, the whole audience had risen to add importance to their plaudits. She continued and finished the air which, like the pipe of ancient Pan, had fascinated the rustic shepherds of the king's highway. Increasing the power of her voice in proportion to the distance that gradually intervened between the parties, she finished in the style of her very best public

performances. The scene was peculiarly effective.

One evening she felt rather annoyed at the general prejudice expressed by the company then present against all English vocal compositions, the opinion being altogether in favour of foreign music; some even going so far as to assert that nothing could be good of which the air was entirely and originally of English extraction. Malibran in vain endeavoured to maintain that all countries possess, though perhaps in a less equal degree, many ancient melodies peculiarly their own; that nothing could exceed the beauty of the Scottish, Irish, Welsh, and even some of the old English airs. She then named many compositions of our best modern composers, Bishop, Barnett, Lee, Horn, &c., declaring her belief that if she were to produce one of Bishop or Horn's ballads as the works of a signor Vescovo, or Cuerno, thus Italianising and Espagnolising their names, they would *faire furore*.

In the midst of this discussion she volunteered a new Spanish song, composed, as she said, by a Don Chocarreria. She commenced—the greatest attention prevailed; she touched the notes lightly, introducing variations on repeating the symphony, and with a serious feeling, though a slight smile might be traced on her lips, began :

" Maria tràyga un caldero  
De àqua, Llàma levanté  
Maria pòn tu caldero  
Ayamos nuestro té."

She finished—the plaudits resounded, and the air was quoted as a further example how far superior foreign talent was to English.

Malibran assented to the justness of their remarks, and agreed to yield still more to their argument if the same air sung adagio should be found equally beautiful when played presto. The parties were agreed ; when, to the positive consternation of all present, and very much to the diversion of Malibran herself, the

Spanish melody which she had so divinely sung, was, on being played quick, instantly recognised as a popular English nursery song, by no means of the highest class. Shall we shock our readers when we remind them that

“ *Maria tráyga un cedro,*”

means literally “ *Molly put the kettle on.*”

This was the Spanish air! the composer’s name being Chocarrera, a most appropriate one for the jest.

Whatever may be said regarding the existence of mental presentiment, whether viewed in the light of an accidental coincidence, or considered as the result of a temperament prone to superstition and foreboding, it is true that certain previous ideas of a fatal character have often been but too correctly fulfilled. A feeling of this nature so entirely occupied the mind of Henry the Great of France, that on the morning of his assassination he felt equally oppressed and confused. This is an instance out of many incidental to the history of every country, and

if we consult the memoirs of private life, we shall find instances innumerable. Strange and startling as it may appear, Malibran, the ill-fated darling of the Muses, while yet in the possession of health, youth, and strength, was warned of coming death. This sad foreboding of a too early fate she imparted to her confidential friends. Alas ! how truly, how sadly, was it verified !

The following is another instance of her remarkable presentiment of coming events. In the month of July she was affected with an indisposition of a nature so very slight, however, that two days afterwards she took her accustomed exercise on horseback. Her mind at the time was impressed with a feeling that something fatal was about to happen to her. Under this idea it was remarkable that she insisted upon riding out the morning of the accident, though strongly advised against it by her friends. Her whole conversation turned upon a melancholy presentiment which she entertained, that

she was not long for this world. On being rallied for this, she with her usual gaiety said, "she would gallop it off." On setting off at a canter, the horse, one she had ridden the whole season, suddenly broke from his paces, and she lost all control. Bounding round the inner circle of the Regent's Park, the excited animal was stopped by a stranger. Unprepared for the sudden check, Malibran was precipitated with violence against the paling. With that energy of character so natural to her disposition, she could not be prevented by the entreaties of her friends from performing two characters on that evening !

## CHAPTER IX.

Malibran's versatility—Quality of her voice and its management—*Tours de force.*

THE range of Malibran's abilities was greater than that of any singer who preceded her. The characters in which she appeared comprised the highest walks of operatic tragedy, the most delicate and refined of domestic comedy.

She has trod the stage as the proud and vengeful Semiramide, the gentle and betrayed Desdemona, the impassioned Romeo, the chivalrous Tancredi, the dependent yet

sensitive Ninetta, the withered prude Fidalma, the romantic Amina, the heroic Felicia, the constant Isolina, the devoted Fidelio; while in the orchestra she was equally successful in the majesty of Handel, and the *naïveté* of a French romance. Language was no bar to her. She surmounted vernacular difficulties with the same ease that she moulded her voice to varied expressions.

She entered into the peculiarities of national character with an equally happy felicity, and was the finest possible illustration of the admitted axiom, that genius is of no country. Both as a singer and an actress, she was distinguished by versatility of power and liveliness of conception; she could play with music of every possible style, school, or century.

A remarkable combination of fine qualities concentered to render Madame de Beriot the wonder she was to all who beheld her. She appeared to have an instinctive perception of the graceful, the beautiful, and the true in nature.

She saw at once what was to be done, and she obeyed the impulse of her feelings. Hence the unpremeditated exhibition of some of her finest actions and attitudes. She also possessed an energy of character that kept those about her, and who watched her progress, in constant admiration ; and, added to her genius and energy, she had acquired a spirit of industry that would put to shame the most mechanical plodder.

Her voice, which was a contralto in character, took a range that was perfectly astonishing. We have heard her descend to F and E flat below the lower C in the treble clef, and reach C and D in alt. In execution she kept the listener in a state of wonderment ; and in the most complicated *fioritures* she not only performed all that the flexible mechanicians could achieve, but even there she beat them in their own stronghold, for she was sure to add some exquisite grace entirely her own ; and we venture to say that no mortal ever heard her sing the same piece precisely alike, or exactly

repeat a cadence, when she has been encored.

What is remarkable too, and at once displays her great genius, her cadences and adornments were always in keeping with the character and style of the composition she was singing. And as to her *tours de force*, many years will probably elapse before we hear her equal in that one branch of vocal art. Her principal characteristic, however, was expression ; and expression in all its features, shades, and varieties, from its loftiest epic flights, embracing the sublime of anger and the profoundly pathetic, down to the winning and playful. It is needless to recur to her expression in the most prominent parts of the Sonnambula and the Fidelio. But they who remember her in the Romeo, how piercing her tones of anguish ! how intense the agony of her features ! or her look, attitude, and tones in the last scene of *Gli Orazzii e Uriassi*, will store the reminiscence of them among the treasures of high art.

She prided herself on her professional industry, and it was no trifling indisposition that could make her relax one day from her duty. But her health was suffering, not only by the toils of her vocation, but oftentimes by "the grief that passeth speaking." Few thought

" When the strain was sung,  
Till a thousand hearts were stirr'd,  
What lifedrops, from the minstrel rung,  
Have gush'd at every word."

## CHAPTER X.

Manchester Festival—Illness of Madame Malibran—Death.

WE now approach that fatal point in her earthly pilgrimage, for which the Manchester Festival must ever be remembered. “So young, and her destiny so soon accomplished!” But in that destiny itself there are features which must strike the beholders with wonder as well as terror. Happy those, whose fortunes enable them to retain all the elegancies of life—whose means enable them to study the arts and sciences as a pastime, to quit or resume them at their pleasure; or who, according as

fancy prevails, may content themselves with sitting in critical judgment on the efforts of those who must please, or shrink back into the arms of poverty and insignificance !

Passing over the trials of her girlhood, and of her first unhappy marriage, we behold her gradually, yet speedily, ascending that high eminence of which the poet says,

“ Ah, who can tell how hard it is to climb !”

until, leaving all her competitors behind, she attained the highest pinnacle of fame. Behold her triumphant in the capital of France ! the pride of her profession, and idol of all hearts ! every one her friend, and riches pouring in upon her in the midst of those applauses she so highly merited ! Accompany her into Italy ! The ancient spirit of the Romans is roused by her voice ; the Neapolitans, Milanese, and Venetians, look upon her as a seraph descended from their beautiful and tranquil skies ; and all is harmony, love, devotion, and affection ! She revisits England, and an enthusiasm, though

less livelily expressed, not the less sincerely felt, awaits her steps. The audience of one of the finest theatres in the world, passing by the custom of their former proprieties, rise *en masse* on her appearance. She is the idol of what is termed fashionable life, the friend of the most accomplished of her sex. The triumphs of success promise, if possible, a still more brilliant future; for as yet she is only twenty-seven years of age. A long career of honour is before her.

But in the midst of her high achievements—at the very moment of her most successful triumph—death springs up suddenly beside her, and strikes her to the tomb !

On her arrival at Manchester, on Sunday, the 11th of September, she was seized with shivering, headache, and other symptoms of indisposition. On the following days her illness increased: and in the mean time the oratorio performances began. On the evening previous to her first morning performance, she

sang no fewer than fourteen pieces among her friends at the hotel; and, although warned against over-exerting herself, she persisted. Lablache said of her too truly, "*Son esprit est trop fort pour son petit corps.*" On the Tuesday, although suffering, she sang both in the morning and evening.

On the Wednesday her indisposition was still more evident, yet she went on, and her delivery of the last solo in the "Israel in Egypt," "Sing ye to the Lord," never can be forgotten by those who heard it. On the evening of Wednesday, she bore up with her lioness heart against the struggles of nature. The last notes she uttered in this world were in the duet from Andronico, "Fanne se alberghi in petto," which she sang with Madame Caradori. It was encored, and the effect was tremendous. The shake she made at the top of her voice, at the close of the duet, was perfect. Amid the tumult of an audience transported with wonder and delight, she was led off exhausted. She

had made an enormous effort, and achieved a triumph over her sinking frame. She had excited herself to an almost supernatural energy, lest it should be said that her illness was feigned.

A correspondent of the Morning Post says, "Her agonising cries that night will not be erased from the memory of the writer, who was within a short distance of the room in which she expired. She constantly ejaculated, '*j'étouffe, j'étouffe.*'" This is indeed most affecting.

From this time she continued to grow worse, and at twenty minutes before twelve o'clock on the night of Friday, the 23rd of September, the much gifted, much beloved Malibran expired.

The demise of Malibran, in the full meridian of her splendid career, cast a gloom over all ranks and parties; and selfish or unthinking indeed must have been that heart that did not mourn over the premature extinction of the

queen of song ! Her death has created a void in the worlds of music and the stage, that may never again be filled ; and to have seen Malibran in even any one of her various triumphs, will be, among her contemporaries, an event ever to be remembered and cherished with pride and with rapture.

The death of this unhappy lady was attended with circumstances of a peculiarly painful nature —on which, however, we must drop the curtain ; remarking only, that among her innumerable friends and admirers, it is to be lamented that no one could have been found of sufficient energy of purpose to have insisted, in her state of health, upon her abandoning her intention of attending the Manchester Festival.

For the rest—

“ No friend's complaint, no kind domestic tear,  
Pleased thy pale ghost, or graced thy mournful bier.  
By foreign hand thy dying eyes were closed,  
By foreign hand thy decent limbs composed,

By foreign hand thy humble grave adorn'd,  
By strangers honoured, and by strangers mourn'd!"

**END OF SECOND MEMOIR.**



**THIRD MEMOIR,**

**&c. &c.**



**“LAST SCENE OF ALL.”**



## DEATH AND FUNERAL.

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ON the afternoon of Sunday, the 11th of September, 1836, Madame Malibran de Beriot and her husband arrived at Manchester, to fulfil their engagement at the festival, and stopped, in the first instance, at the Royal Hotel; but upon learning that Lablache, Ivanoff, Assandri, and Caradori Allan were at the Mosley Arms, they removed there the same afternoon. They were shown a double-bedded room on the first floor, which Madame Malibran said would do very well, and they agreed to share a sitting-

room with Signor Lablache and Mademoiselle Assandri. The bed-room was No. 9, and on Mrs. Richardson, the landlady of the Mosley Arms, showing them to it, Madame Malibran observed that she had been in the Mosley Arms Hotel before, but in its former situation. Mrs. Richardson said that it was twelve years ago, and Madame Malibran immediately rejoined, "My bed-room was No. 9 there, and now I shall have No. 9 here; is it not singular?" They were attended by only one male domestic, a foreigner, who had not been long in their service. No female attendant came with Madame Malibran, but she was desirous to engage one here. On her arrival at the Mosley Arms she appeared to be in tolerably good health and spirits, though she complained to a gentleman, a member of the festival committee, who called upon her that afternoon, of shivering and headache.

On Monday morning she took at breakfast her usual diet of a few oysters and some porter

diluted with water, which she had always found to be the best strengthening preparation for her great vocal exertions. She did not attend the general rehearsal of the performers, vocal and instrumental, which took place at the church on the Monday; but there was no reason to suppose that at that time she suffered much, if at all, from indisposition. Again, on Tuesday morning, previously to going to the first oratorio, she took some oysters and a small quantity of porter and water mixed. On Tuesday evening, before going to the concert, she complained of a sensation of sickness, and again on Wednesday morning, before she rose, she said she did not feel well; but she nevertheless persisted in going. On that morning she tried again to take her usual meal of oysters and diluted porter, but she was sick, and could not finish her breakfast. Mrs. Richardson told her that she thought that the porter did not agree with her, and Madame Malibran replied, "What can I do? I must

take something for my voice, and I find this the best thing I can take." However, she did not take any more, either at that time or subsequently. At the church that morning, many persons who had repeatedly heard her before, were of opinion that she was not in good health. In the evening she was no better; indeed her weakly sensations had increased, when she went to that concert which was to prove the premature and melancholy conclusion of her brilliant but short career. She took a part in Beethoven's canon (from *Fidelio*) for four voices—

"What joy doth fill my breast!"

This piece, which was short, and was not encored, was the only one in which she sung before that which will henceforth be always associated with the melancholy reminiscences attaching to her name—the duet between Andronico and Irene, "Fanne se alberghi in petto," in Mercadante's opera of Andronico. The latter part of the duet was sung a second

time, and almost immediately after its conclusion, Dr. Bardsley, who was seated in the pit, was summoned to attend Malibran, who had fainted. Shortly afterwards, one of the stewards announced to the audience that she had become so ill, that Dr. Bardsley had thought it necessary to bleed her in the arm, and that he did not think it would be safe for her to sing again that evening.

One little circumstance occurred about this time, which is strikingly characteristic of the energy, the almost *fierté*, of the manner which Malibran sometimes displayed. Immediately after she was bled, some bystander observed in her hearing, that she would be better shortly, and able to resume her duties that evening. Turning to the speaker, with a fire in her eye that few would have expected to have seen in a female faint from exertion, excitement, and loss of blood, she exclaimed,—“ What ! do you think I am like your English fighters, that I can lose blood and go to work again directly ?”

As soon as possible she was conveyed to the Mosley Arms Hotel, and to her bed, where she received every attention from her kind-hearted landlady.

On Thursday morning, when Mrs. Richardson went to see her, she complained of a violent pain in her head, and requested her to touch her temples, and feel their throbbing. She added, "I have been trying my voice in bed, and it as strong and clear, and I have as much power, as though I were in perfect health; but every note seems to vibrate through my brain." She was subsequently very sick, and Mrs. Richardson persuaded her to take a cup of coffee, which, however, her stomach immediately rejected. Mrs. Richardson told her she was not fit to leave her bed, and besought her not to think of doing so that day; but she replied, "In the voice that I am, the public will not believe that I am ill; therefore I will make the attempt." She got up, but was not able to dress herself, and was assisted by Mrs.

Richardson. While dressing her hair, of which she had a profusion, she exclaimed to her husband, "O dear ! this hair: why should I not get rid of it? I can wear a cap; and I am sure I should feel a great deal better if this hair was taken from my head." When dressed, M. de Beriot led her into the sitting-room, and there she had another very violent attack of sickness and vomiting, while the borough-reeve's carriage was at the door of the hotel, waiting to convey her to the church.

It may give some idea of her condition at that time, to mention, that in the expectation of her again suffering from this cause in the carriage, sheets and towels were placed in it; and she was so debilitated from the effect of so much sickness, that she was supported, almost carried, from her sitting-room to the carriage, into which she crept on her hands and knees. She complained of pains in her head, chest, and stomach; but, as we have stated, she determined to go to the church, not-

withstanding her own belief that it was a dangerous step, and that she was not physically equal to the exertion which the parts assigned her in the performances would have required. She went—and, shortly afterwards, experiencing a violent attack of hysteria, was immediately conveyed back to the carriage, and, accompanied by Dr. Bardsley and Mr. Worthington, was taken to the hotel, and placed on a sofa in a private sitting-room, where she rested a while, and said, “I feel myself more comfortable here;” but she still complained of the pain in her head, which was much increased by the violent retchings and sickness that continued during the remainder of the day to distress and weaken her. Dr. Bardsley and Mr. Worthington continued in attendance upon her, and at half-past twelve o’clock that day they issued a medical certificate to the effect, that in their opinion she could not with safety appear at the oratorio that morning, or at the concert that evening.

On the Friday morning Dr. Hull was called in, and, after a consultation, it was made known to the committee by him and Dr. Bardsley, that Madame Malibran de Beriot was worse, and that she would not be able to sing that morning. On Sunday evening, the 18th, Dr. Belluomini arrived from the Quadrant, Regent Street, having been sent for by M. de Beriot, who had become very anxious on the score of his wife's continued ill health. Dr. Belluomini, besides being thoroughly acquainted with the constitution of his patient, from having been her physician for some years, had known her from childhood, and had for some time also been on terms of friendship with her husband and herself. On his arrival he found her in bed, and she appeared much delighted to see him. On that evening she seemed more composed, and slept a little during the night, which she had not done during the two preceding ones. She was still so weak that it was deemed not desirable to remove her from her bed even for a

moment, till Tuesday morning, the 20th, when she was placed in a chair for a few moments till her bed was made; but she appeared much exhausted by the effort, and during a great part of the afternoon remained silent and motionless. During the evening she was somewhat better, both her cough and fever having in some degree abated; and M. de Beriot wrote to this effect to Signor Lablache at Norwich.

Next morning, however, she again grew worse. De Beriot became very much **dejected**, and appeared then to dread the fatal result which subsequently took place; for when exhorted to keep up his spirits, and at all events to conceal his distress from his wife, as it would tend to retard her recovery, and with care she might get better, he said, "O no; she never will get better; it's impossible!" On Thursday afternoon, the 22nd, he wished to have some surgeon called in, and Dr. Belluomini agreeing with him that some accou-

cheur should be sent for, Mr. William Lewis, of George Street, on the suggestion of Mrs. Richardson, who had previously mentioned the names of several eminent practitioners, was called in about seven o'clock in the evening. He immediately ordered all her hair to be cut off, and this having been done by M. de Beriot himself, vinegar was applied to her head and temples, hot fomentations to her stomach, and hot water to her feet, and every means resorted to that could be thought of to induce a favourable turn to the disorder, through a reaction in the system. Dr. Belluomini asked Mr. Lewis whether in his judgment Madame Malibranc's state of pregnancy materially affected her in relation to the disorder. Mr. Lewis expressed a decided opinion that it did not, as she was in an early stage of pregnancy. His impression on first seeing her, from the state of her pulse and insensibility, was, that she was fast sinking under the malady, and could not recover. In point of fact, she never rallied

for an instant, except to take a little barley water from the hand of her husband, and she expired at precisely twenty minutes before twelve o'clock on Friday night, the 23rd of September, after an illness, dating its commencement from the Wednesday night, of nine days.

M. de Beriot had shortly before been prevailed upon to retire from the chamber where he had, with the most assiduous and affectionate solicitude, watched by the bedside of the patient, taking no rest and refusing food. The painful intelligence was no sooner communicated to him by Mrs. Richardson, in the most delicate way possible, than he fainted and fell upon the floor with considerable force. He was in a very painful state of distraction for some time after his restoration to sensibility; and, whether in compliance with the entreaties of Dr. Belluomini, we know not, he never entered the chamber, or saw the body of his deceased wife again. When his immediate

departure was determined upon, he sent for Mr. Beale, music-dealer, of St. Anne's Square, to whom, though not previously acquainted with him, he expressed his wishes with respect to the funeral. He particularly desired that no cast of the head or face should be taken, nor any portrait, and that no *post mortem* examination should be made; and, in short, that the body should not be touched by any one, except in the course of the necessary preparations for interment. He also gave a written document to Mr. Beale, authorising him to conduct the arrangements as to the interment, and to fix the time, place, &c., of the funeral, as he should deem proper.

Before M. de Beriot quitted the house, he presented to Mrs. Richardson a ring of turquoises, set in black enamel, which had been worn by Madame Malibran herself, and also a locket, containing some of the deceased's hair; and both he and Dr. Belluomini promised to write to her when able to do so. He was

so reduced in strength that he could scarcely stand, and was supported by Mrs. Richardson to the carriage, in which he quitted Manchester within one hour after the death of his wife.

The daily papers spoke of the strong reciprocal affection which De Beriot and his gifted wife manifested for each other during their short stay at Manchester, and mentioned one or two instances in which Madame Malibran had exhibited her anxious affection for her husband's health and professional *éclat*; while his unremitting and assiduous attendance by her sick-bed, his eagerness to anticipate her every wish and want, formed an equally marked characteristic of the strength of his attachment to her. To these facts may be added, that even when she was unable to speak to him, Madame Malibran frequently pressed his hand in hers, and turned her head on one side that she might look upon him. In the course of a conversation with Mrs. Richardson, at an early stage of her illness, she mentioned

that she had known De Beriot nine years, and had been seven years of that time married to him, but that she had not been able to make their marriage known till within the last two years; what circumstances had prevented its due publicity she did not say. She then added, emphatically, "If he had had any faults, I should have found them out before now; but there never was such a man. I am certainly blessed with a most affectionate husband; and that, I am afraid, few can say in a similar situation to myself." She had two children during this marriage; one, a girl, died in her infancy, and the other, a boy, about four years old, of whom she spoke to Mrs. Richardson, as residing with his paternal aunt, at an estate purchased by his father and mother, in the neighbourhood of Brussels. M. de Beriot wrote to his sister, after his arrival in London, that it was his intention, after staying a few hours, to proceed immediately to this estate, to join her and his child.

In justice to all parties it may be right to state, that from the time of Dr. Belluomini's arrival, Drs. Hull and Bardsley, and Mr. Worthington, who had attended Madame Malibran up to that period, at the request of the festival committee, ceased their visits. Dr. Belluomini declined holding a consultation with them on the case, on hearing their reasons for the mode of treatment they had adopted; alleging, that as he was a homœopathist, and as his practice was consequently very different from theirs, a consultation could be of no use whatever. Dr. Belluomini was not at all known to the faculty in Manchester, nor does it appear what his course of treatment of the deceased had been from the Sunday evening up to the time when Mr. Lewis was called in.

Amongst other groundless rumours one that was very rife was, that Madame Malibran was in the habit of taking wine or liqueurs too freely, and that it was to this cause, and not to any sudden faintness from over-exertion,

that must be attributed what some were pleased to call her “sham” illness. There is authority for the most unqualified contradiction to this rumour, both as to the cause of the illness which terminated so fatally, and as to the general habit so roundly charged upon the unfortunate deceased. So far from its being anything like the truth, it is affirmed that since her arrival at Manchester she never (with one slight exception) tasted either spirits or wine; and for this reason, that, in her own opinion, either the one or the other would have had an injurious effect upon her voice; her regimen for which was a few oysters and a small quantity of bottled porter, sometimes diluted with water. The slanderous report had been so industriously circulated, that by some means it reached the ears of Madame Malibran herself, and, it is needless to say, gave her no inconsiderable pain. She mentioned it to Mrs. Novello, exclaiming indignantly, “To think, Mrs. Novello, that they say I drink! O it is

grievous! What will they say next of me?" Mrs. Novello endeavoured to soothe her, saying, "Never mind, dear; it is the envious spirit of inferior talent to depreciate those who excel." On another occasion, when, thirsty from the fever, Madame Malibran asked Dr. Bardsley if she might take a little champagne and water, the doctor said she might, and she took a small quantity, which she seemed to enjoy, as being cool and refreshing. But so great was her objection to spirits, that when a little was recommended to her, mixed with water, she absolutely refused to touch it. Sir George Smart, when told of this rumour, expressed himself in very strong terms. He said he had known her intimately from her childhood, both in private life and in her public professional engagements, and he was satisfied that the assertion as to her habits was destitute of the slightest foundation in truth.

It has already been stated that M. de Beriot, just before quitting Manchester, gave to Mr.

Beale a written authority to conduct the whole of the funeral arrangements, in such a manner as he should deem consonant with the feelings of her friends. Mr. Beale, naturally sensible of the delicacy of the situation in which he was placed, was desirous to have the sanction and co-operation of the Festival Committee, or at least of some committee deputed by them to act with him; and, in accordance with his wish, expressed to some of the influential members of that committee, a special general meeting of the whole, comprising about three hundred and twenty gentlemen, was convened by circular for Monday morning, for the purpose of taking the subject into consideration. There was a very numerous attendance in obedience to the summons, more members being present than on any former occasion during the existence of the committee. It was determined at that meeting that the funeral should be a public one, and a sub-committee of fifteen or sixteen gentlemen was appointed

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him, that he might represent the wish of the committee, and the obvious propriety of his paying the last mark of respect to the remains of the deceased. A letter was received by return of post, stating that on Mr. Beale commencing his mission he found that De Beriot had already quitted London for Antwerp or Brussels, which place was not certain. No letter had been received in town from M. de Beriot since his departure. Under these circumstances, it was arranged that a number of gentlemen should officiate as chief mourners and pall-bearers. Sir George Smart expressed his intention to be present; and a letter was received by a member of the sub-committee from Mr. Bunn, the manager of the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, stating that he would be present to pay the last mark of respect to the memory of the unfortunate deceased. The sub-committee made a request that those gentlemen who intended in either way to mark their sense of the unfortunate calamity, and their regret

for the loss which had been sustained, would notify their intention to the committee at the Town Hall before twelve o'clock on the following Friday. The committee met again on Thursday, and it was expected that they would shortly be prepared to give to the public a report on the circumstances connected with Madame Malibran's illness and death.

Several applications had been made at the **Mosley Arms**, by artists and others, to be allowed to take a sketch of the features, or to make a cast from the head and face of the deceased; but not one of these applications was granted: the instructions of M. de Beriot, in this respect, having been complied with to the letter. The body was placed in a leaden coffin on the Sunday night, and about ten o'clock on the following morning the lid was soldered down.

## THE FUNERAL.

At eight o'clock on Saturday morning the tolling of the muffled bell at the Collegiate Church announced the preparations for the funeral. At that time several gentlemen who were to take part in the ceremony had assembled at the Mosley Arms. The main entrance of the hotel was, in deference to the ceremonials of the dead towards persons of distinction on the Continent, hung with black drapery, and fell in folds at each side of the door. At half-past nine the Rev. J. Crook, and the Rev. R. Firth, of St. Augustine's Chapel, in Granby Row, were admitted into the chamber where the body of Madame Malibran reposed, to perform the service of the Catholic Church. These gentlemen were followed by the mourners, and some of Mrs. Richardson's family. The body, enclosed in an oak shell, which was placed in a leaden coffin, and after-

wards in another solid oak coffin, covered with black cloth, was laid on the bed. An ivory crucifix was placed on the lid at the head of the coffin, and on each side was a wax light in silver branches. On the mantel-shelf were four other wax lights. The mourners and pall-bearers were then arranged at each side of the bed, and the Rev. Mr. Cook and the Rev. Mr. Firth stood at the foot, and read the office for the dead. The service commenced with the 129th Psalm and the 50th Psalm, which were read in Latin. These were followed by other portions of the service used on such occasions, in the course of which the ceremony of sprinkling the body was also performed.

The reverend gentlemen and the mourners then left the room, and arrangements were made for conveying the body to the church.

At half-past ten o'clock the hearse, drawn by four horses, was brought up to the door of the hotel. The body was then removed from the chamber in which it had lain, and carried by

six men to the hearse. The coffin, which was, as we stated before, composed of solid oak, was covered with handsome black cloth, and (as is the custom in Lancashire) had no other ornament than the black handles on each side, and at the head and foot. A brass plate, in the form of a shield on the lid, contained the following inscription, under the figure of the cross:—

**MARIA FELICIA DE BERIOT.**

**DIED SEPTEMBER 23, 1836,**

**AGED 28 YEARS.**

A similar brass plate, surmounted with the wings of the cherubim, and containing the same inscription, was placed at the back of the hearse.

Six mourning coaches, with four horses each, were then drawn up to the door of the hotel, and the mourners entered in the following order:—

In the first coach, Mr. Macvicar, the Broughreeve of Manchester, as chief mourner, supported by the Earl of Wilton, and Sir George Smart.

In the second coach, Mr. Beale, Mr. Willert, Mr. Bunn of Drury Lane Theatre, and Mr. Brandt the barrister.

In the third coach, Mr. Shore, Mr. Joseph Ewart, Mr. Wright, and Mr. Shuttleworth.

In the fourth coach, Mr. Lot Gardiner, Mr. Bellhouse, and Mr. Withington, members of the Festival Committee.

In the fifth coach, Mr. Sharp, Mr. George Peel, and Mr. Hodgson, churchwardens of Manchester; and Mr. Joseph Peel, a magistrate.

In the sixth carriage, Mr. Wanklyn, treasurer of the Festival; Mr. Thomas Potter, a magistrate, and brother to the member for Wigan; Mr. Broadhurst, and Mr. S. Phillips, magistrates.

It was near eleven o'clock when the proces-

sion left the hotel, and it moved in the following order :

The Deputy Constable of Manchester, with a party of his men, their staves covered with black crape.

Two mutes with staves.

About sixty gentlemen of the town, dressed in deep mourning, and walking three abreast.

State-lid of feathers ;

The hearse, drawn by four beautiful black horses : the hearse also ornamented with feathers.

Six mourning coaches, each drawn by four horses, containing the mourners and pall-bearers : each carriage was attended by two men with black staves.

Then followed a long train of private carriages, among which were those of Earl Wilton, Mr. Mark Phillips, M.P.; Mr. Trafford of Trafford; Mr. Chadwick of Swinerton; Mr. Atherton; Mr. Fort of Sedgley; Mr. John Brooks, Mr. Hardman, Mr. Walfe, Mr. Edmund Bushley, Mrs. Richardson, Mr. Garnett, Mr. R. I. I. Harris, Mr. G. W. Wood,

late Member for Lancashire ; Mr. Walker of Leicestershire, Mr. Thomas Potter, Mr. Heywood, &c.

The procession, in order to avoid the inconvenience of passing through the streets adjacent to the church on market-day, took the following route : Down Market-street, through St. Mary's-gate, over Blackfriars-bridge into Salford ; through Greengate, over the Iron-bridge, which crosses the Irwell, and through Hunt's Bank to the church. Throughout the whole line, from the hotel to the church, an immense number of persons lined each side of the street, the whole of whom behaved in the most becoming and decent manner, and did not evince the slightest appearance of levity. At Salford the flag on the church steeple was hoisted half-mast high, and the muffled bell tolled in the most mournful manner. At the Collegiate Church the flag on the tower was also hoisted half-mast high. On the arrival of the procession at the sacred enclosure, the

gentlemen who preceded the hearse were joined by another numerous party of gentlemen, and formed themselves into a double line from the church-gates to the church, whilst the body, supported by the pall-bearers, and attended by the mourners, passed through them. The procession was met at the entrance by the Rev. C. D. Wray, the Rev. R. Parkinson, and the Rev. Mr. Marsden, with the choir in full robes. In this manner the procession entered the church, the pall supported by Mr. Phillips, Mr. Potter, Mr. Broadhurst, Mr. Sharp, Mr. Hodgson, Mr. G. Peel, Mr. Wanklyn, and Mr. Joseph Peel. The pall-bearers wore silk scarfs and hatbands, and the mourners were dressed in deep mourning with black crape scarfs and hatbands. The gentlemen who had preceded the body from the hotel followed the procession into the church. The pulpit and reading desks were hung with black cloth.

The church, at this period, presented a singularly mournful appearance. The galleries,

the aisle, and every spot from whence a view could be obtained, were crowded to excess by persons of highly respectable appearance, the greater part of whom were attired in mourning. As the body entered the door of the church, the organ commenced playing the "Dead March in Saul," and in a few moments the body of her who only ten days before delighted the thousands that had assembled under the same roof, was placed on the bier, in the centre aisle, a cold and inanimate corpse.

The burial service commenced by the 39th and 90th Psalms, which were chanted by the choir. The Rev. Mr. Wray then read the epistle taken from the 15th chapter of Corinthians, after which the choir sang, in a most affecting manner, an anthem from the Psalms that had been selected for the occasion. The beautiful air which Madame Malibran sang on Wednesday, "O Lord, have mercy upon me, for I am in trouble," was then played on the

organ, and recalled the recollection of the splendid talent which she displayed when she sang that piece to the audience. The body was then carried on the bier, preceded by the pall-bearers, through the church to the south aisle, where a grave was prepared for its reception. It appears that this grave originally belonged to a Fitzherbert family, and had not been opened for a period of fifty years, when (it was stated) a Catholic priest was interred. The grave was about five feet and a half deep. When the necessary arrangements were made, the mortal remains of Madame Malibran were lowered into the earth, and the service was read in a most impressive manner by the Rev. Mr. Wray. The mourners and other friends who surrounded the grave took a last look at the coffin, and with tears in their eyes retired from the spot. The thousands who were in the church then pressed forward to see the grave; and in order that they should have a perfect view of the coffin, candles were placed

at the head and foot, and the church-door having been thrown open, the immense multitude entered one way, and retired by another. The most perfect order prevailed throughout this proceeding, and not the slightest interruption or disturbance was made.

In the church were observed many of the leading merchants and other gentlemen in Manchester; and, mixed with the crowd, was also noticed Mr. Kean, the tragedian, who had been playing during the last week at Liverpool.

The funeral was conducted by Mr. Satterfield, of St. Ann's-square, Manchester.

As a mark of respect to Madame Malibran, the mourners attended service at the Collegiate Church on the following Sunday.

The rich and the poor, all the gradations of society, impelled by one common feeling—that of offering the tribute of their homage to departed greatness—thronged to witness the closing obsequies of Malibran. Many persons of

distinction were seen endeavouring to effect a passage through the crowd, offering heavy sums for seats, whence they might witness the noble and ennobling ceremonies performed over the mighty dead.

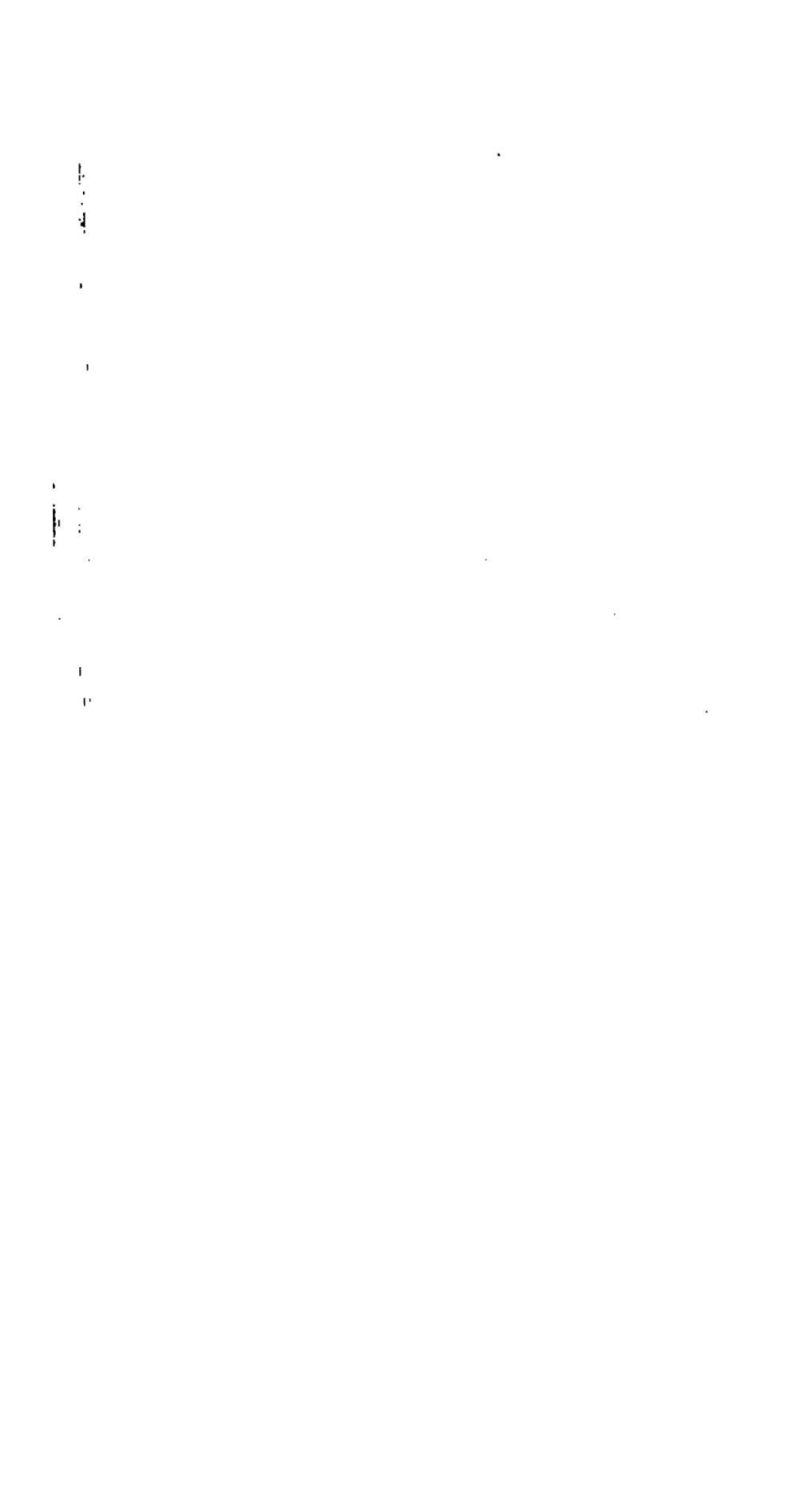
While a dense mass of spectators were collected around the consecrated spot, the solemnity of the scene was rendered more impressive by the breaking out of a tremendous storm. The rain poured down in heavy showers, more like buckets of water than rain-drops; but to the honour of Manchester it must be recorded, that not one man, however humble his station in life, was seen to put on his hat—they one and all remained uncovered. There was not a lady who, attaching a trivial and undue importance to her dress, attempted to put up her parasol, or to leave the melancholy scene in search of shelter—they stood their ground with as much patience and zeal as if it had been the finest day in summer: so enthralled were their

feelings by the deeply moving scene, that they appeared perfectly unconscious of the fearful, and not unappropriate commotion of the elements.

**NOTES, ANECDOTES,**

**&c. &c.**

**BY M. DE B—.**



## NOTES, ANECDOTES, &c.

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### MADAME MALIBRAN'S RETURN FROM AMERICA, AND DEBUT AT PARIS.

DURING the season of 1827 and 1828, the performances of Mademoiselle Sontag attracted crowds to the Opera Italien in Paris. Mademoiselle Sontag was at that time the idol of the French public.

Whilst that charming singer was in the zenith of her popularity, Madame Malibran returned from New York. She sang at several

private parties. The tones of her voice excited wonder and admiration in the musical circles of Paris, and Madame Malibran became the engrossing topic of conversation.

Nevertheless, the directors of the *Opera Buffa*, deterred either by pecuniary considerations, or by the fear of placing too great vocalists in rivalry one to the other, allowed two months to elapse before they made any offer of engagement to Madame Malibran.

In the interim she availed herself of the opportunity afforded by Galli's benefit, which took place at the *Grand Opera*, and she made her *début* in the character of *Semiramide*. The success which attended that performance immediately procured for her an engagement at the *Théâtre Italien*. *Otello* was the opera chosen for her first appearance. Never did any singer produce so surprising an effect. The audience were enthusiastic in their applause. They knew not which most to admire, the singular power and extent of her voice, the

deep feeling and expression of her style, or her energetic and impassioned acting.

## HER ACTING.

Such was the extraordinary impression produced by Madame Malibran's acting, that she seemed to have attained, as it were intuitively, that perfection which in Talma was the result of long years of study. Yet her acting was not, as many have supposed, the mere inspiration of the moment. Those who have heard Madame Malibran converse on the histrionic art, must be convinced that she made it a subject of profound reflection. Her father took her with him to Italy when she was scarcely four years of age, and consequently, in her earliest childhood, her thoughts and attention had been turned to the study of acting. Being endowed with quick intelligence, profound sensibility, and a peculiar facility for imitation, she appeared destined by nature to become an actress. Indeed the dramatic art was one of

the few things which Madame Malibran made an object of serious study.

Her gaiety was inexhaustible, and imparted animation and cheerfulness to all who surrounded her; but when her mind was occupied by the study of any new part, she applied herself to it with the most profound and abstracted attention. When on the stage, her efforts never for a single moment relaxed. She was excellent even in the most subordinate details of a character; she never allowed herself to be influenced by preferences for particular authors or composers, but entered heart and soul into the character she had to sustain.

Madame Malibran was once asked which was her favourite character?—Her answer was, “The character I may happen to be acting, whatever it may be.”

#### VOICE AND STYLE OF SINGING.

Madame Malibran’s voice embraced three complete octaves, extending from the contralto

D to the upper soprano D. There is no sound in nature which can convey any idea of her lower notes. Those who never heard her sing the romance in *Otello*,—those who never heard her soul-moving tones in that sublime phrase in the *Capuletti*, *Sul mio sasso*, have not felt the vibration of the tenderest chord of the heart.

Her voice, though sufficiently powerful to fill the spacious theatres of *San Carlos* and *La Scala*, was capable of executing with precision all the difficulties of vocal composition: ascending and descending scales, fiorituri, cadences, all were equally easy to her. She had not, like many other singers, a few favourite ornaments to introduce without distinction into every piece; her ornaments were always in perfect unison with the style of the music, with the meaning of the words, and with the dramatic situation of the character. Her style was light and graceful in the *Opera Buffa*, and grand in the serious opera; and every note she

introduced seemed to be an integral part of the piece to which they were adapted.

## CHARACTER AND DISPOSITION.

Maria Malibran, by her noble and generous disposition, conciliated the esteem and attachment of all her operatic comrades. When she became acquainted with Mademoiselle Sontag, she found her no less distinguished for amiable feeling than for brilliant talent, and she conceived a cordial friendship for her. All who heard them sing together the duos in *Semiramide* and *Tancredi*, will remember the exquisite ornaments they introduced, and which owed their origin to the inventive fancy of Madame Malibran. Their voices seemed as though they had been created one for the other, and presented the *beau ideal* of perfect harmony. Their duos were the perfection of art, and were like the performance of one singer with two voices.

Envy had no place in the heart of Maria

Malibran. The success of her friends gratified her no less than her own success; and she was always ready to defend those who were the objects of severe criticism. She never sought to arrogate a superiority over others, by setting herself forward in prominent characters. In taking the secondary part of Zerlina in *Don Giovanni*, whilst Mademoiselle Sontag performed the character of *Donna Anna*, she gave a proof of the absence of that professional arrogance which ever accompanies mediocrity. The public fully appreciated this feeling; and every night reiterated rounds of applause obliged her to repeat the air *Batti, batti, bel Masetto*.

## BENEVOLENCE.

Madame Malibran's greatest pleasure consisted in doing good. She was never so happy as when she had the opportunity of performing a benevolent action.

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full of enthusiasm for the beautiful in art; and whilst she was anxious to render her tribute of admiration to the talents of her professional colleagues, she was ever indulgent to mediocrity. When present at any dramatic performance, she directed her attention exclusively to the business of the stage; her eyes and ears were riveted on what she saw and heard; and she could never be induced to leave her box till the fall of the curtain.

CONCERT FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE POOR AT  
CALAIS.

In April, 1830, Madame Malibran, on her way from Paris to London, stopped in Calais for the purpose of giving a concert for the benefit of the poor in that city. It was proposed that the concert should take place in the rooms of the Philharmonic Society, but they were found to be too small. It was suggested by Madame Malibran that the performance should take place in the theatre, which was

calculated to accommodate a more numerous audience, and consequently to ensure larger receipts for the objects of the charity. Madame Malibran's wish was complied with, and in a few hours all the necessary arrangements were completed. On her entrance she was greeted by the most rapturous applause. She sang three times in the first part of the concert, and at its conclusion she went round to the principal boxes, conducted by the president of the Philharmonic Society, to collect a subscription for the charity. It is impossible to describe the fascinating grace with which she acquitted herself of this benevolent task.

#### KING'S THEATRE, 1830.

During the season of 1830, Madame Malibran performed at the King's Theatre. The impression she produced must be fresh in the recollection of many who peruse these pages; it is amply described in the London journals of the time. After two years, divided between

Paris and London, her reputation was established throughout Europe. But amidst these triumphs—whilst surrounded by popular homage and admiration—Maria Malibran was not happy. From the end of the year, 1830, Madame Malibran and De Beriot never separated. They visited together the principal cities of Italy, France, and England.

## DEPARTURE FOR ITALY IN 1832.

About the month of May, 1832, when the cholera had made its way to Paris, Lablache left England to proceed to Italy. With the view of avoiding the *cordons sanitaires*, which were established along the French frontier, he determined to pass through Belgium, and take the route of the Rhine. In Brussels he saw Madame Malibran and De Beriot, and jokingly proposed that they should accompany him to Naples, never imagining that they would seriously think of such a thing. To his surprise they agreed to go. In the course of a few

hours their travelling preparations were completed, and they were on their road to I with Lablache and his family. In the h of their departure they neglected the obse ance of a very essential formality in obtain their passports, viz. the sanction of the A trian ambassador. There was, it is ti at that time, no Austrian legation in Bruss but that reason was not deemed sufficient the authorities of Lombardy. The conseque was, that Madame Malibran and De Be were obliged to stop at Chiavenna for th days, at the expiration of which time Labla sent them, from Milan, an express with governor's orders for allowing them to proc without further obstacle.

## MADAME MALIBRAN'S DEBUT AT ROME IN 18

On her arrival in Milan, she was invited several private parties given by the gover and Duke Visconti. Madame Malibran : her travelling companions remained only twe

days at Milan, and then proceeded to Rome, where she performed six times. It may be possible to convey an idea of a musical triumph in France or in England; but the enthusiasm of popular feeling excited on similar occasions in Italy can only be conceived by those who have witnessed it—it was a frenzy, a delirium.

At Rome, the censorship wished to mutilate the libretto of *Otello*, by striking out certain words and phrases, especially the passage delivered by Desdemona's father, beginning *Ti maledico*. But Madame Malibran at once saw and disapproved the absurdity of cancelling a passage on which the whole meaning and interest of the scene depend. She positively refused to sing, except on condition of the opera being performed without curtailment; and at length the censor was obliged to yield the point. This fact was the more extraordinary in a country in which the rigour of the public authorities is extreme, and in

which every one obeys them without a murmur.

## DEATH OF GARCIA.

Whilst she was in Rome, and in the midst of her triumphs, Madame Malibran received intelligence of the death of her father—he who had at once been her master and her model. At the moment when the fatal news was communicated to her, she was at a rehearsal;—she fainted, and it was found necessary to convey her home immediately. But the performance for the following evening had been announced, and that sad necessity which belongs to the profession of an actress, obliged her to appear on the stage, and to go through her part, whilst suffering under the most painful state of feeling.

## NAPLES IN THE SEASON OF 1832.

About the beginning of August, 1832, Madame Malibran made her *début* at Naples. For

a time she had to struggle against some petty intrigues, which, however, her talent speedily subdued. The following remarks on the acting of Madame Malibran, especially her performance of Desdemona, are from the pen of a distinguished Italian critic.

“ The powerful impression she produces, has its origin in her extreme sensibility. It is impossible to impart either to air or recitative a more true and impassioned expression. It is impossible to conceive more dramatic action or more eloquent silence.

“ There is always some appearance of vanity in manifesting one's own sensations, that is to say, when they appertain exclusively to one's self. But we are sure to find numerous echoes, when our sensations are produced by rare and predominant talent. The individual then disappears, and the actress alone remains. We eagerly receive every impression of which she is the exciting cause;—our own become insufficient, and we seek those of others in order to

increase the pleasure and prolong its power. These are the only circumstances under which we listen with indulgence to those who depict what they feel. Such is the influence of superior talent,—talent which is the offspring of nature, rather than of study. The spectator is indifferent when he knows beforehand the gesture and attitude which the performer is about to assume: he looks on without enthusiasm, and no longer identifies himself with the character represented.

“ But when a dramatic performer combines with impassioned acting the charms of a fine voice and a beautiful person, we may justly pronounce it to be perfection. This perfection is found in Madame Malibran.

“ I imagined that I had experienced every emotion I could possibly be excited to by the representation of the beautiful and sublime opera of *Otello*; but I was mistaken. It remained for Madame Malibran to awaken the most susceptible chord in my heart. Her

first entrance on the stage sufficiently denotes the powerful effect she is capable of producing :—

“ ‘ Même quand l’oiseau marche, on voit qu’il a des ailes.’ ”

“ What an easy and graceful deportment ! what pliancy in all her movements ! The illusion is complete. It is not Madame Malibran singing to the audience ; it is Desdemona herself pouring forth her plaintive strains. A feeling of lassitude creeps over our senses when she says :—

“ ‘ Il rigor d’ avverso fato sono stanca di soffrir.’ ”

“ Then again in the duo, after being wholly imbued with a sentiment that seemed to her like celestial bliss, she suddenly draws aside the flattering veil, and exclaims :—

“ ‘ Quanto son frizi i palpiti che destà in noi l’ amore ! ’ ”

“ In the finale of the first act, with what a happy union of dignity and submission she follows her father ! With what an angelic ex-

pression she addresses to him the question whether he wishes her to accept the hand of Rodrigo! How she imposes silence on the latter, and with what contemptuous indifference she hears his declaration! Strong in her love for Otello, she stands like a rock against which the angry waves vainly beat. How overpowering is her terror when she sees her lover enter. The expression of her countenance at the moment tells the story of the whole opera. What a tone of touching *naïveté* she tells her father that she has promised to wed the African warrior. She feels all the misery to which the confession exposes her;—but no matter, she summons resolution to brave it all. Nevertheless, her father's curse wrings from her a cry of horror which thrills the heart of every hearer. Madame Malibran closes the first act in the same exquisite style in which she commences it.

“ As to the second act, the effect it produces is wholly due to the genius of Madame Ma-

bran. The anxiety betrayed in her whole deportment when she enters—the glance of disdain which she casts at Rodrigo—her expressions of solicitude and affection for Otello, on whom she keeps her eyes stedfastly fixed—all are convincing proofs of her innocence. If she were seconded by an actor fully imbued with the spirit of his part, he might, with a single word, give the finishing stroke of perfection to this scene. Desdemona swoons, and recovers only to feel in its full force the horror of her position. She addresses the chorus with earnest inquietude, questions each individual with gestures and looks. Her anguish becomes almost painful to the spectator. At length, after an interval of suspense, the word *vive* is pronounced. What a sudden transition—what a celestial expression beams on the countenance of Madame Malibran! Like a flower which droops its head beneath the sun's too powerful rays, until revived by the refreshing dews of evening—so Madame Malibran, at

the word *vive*, rises and advances across the stage with a rapidity inspired by the emotion which pervades her whole being. This is sublime! It is the finest point throughout the whole of the part. It is the triumph of art, and a triumph the more complete, inasmuch as art is perfectly concealed in the guise of simple nature. The divine expressions of her countenance cannot be described; but the soul-kindled glance, the look of delight, are immediately repressed at the sight of her father! Her joy is succeeded by a deep melancholy. How touching are the tones of her voice when she utters the phrase, "*Se il Padre m'abbandona!*"

"Poor Desdemona reappears in the last act, with that air of placid sadness which never again forsakes her. She casts her eyes around her, and gazes at every object with indifference. Misery is depicted in every gesture. She received the attentions of her friend, rather from affability than from the hope that they can convey to her any consolation. She feels

the presentiment of her approaching death. This is evidently betrayed when she hears the song of the gondolier, who is about to return to his family. She despairs of ever again seeing her beloved. She casts down her head ! What magical effect does Madame Malibran produce by that simple and natural gesture !

“ During the storm, she fancies that the noise is occasioned by some one entering her apartment; and this idea is so eloquently expressed by her movements, that it is for a moment communicated to the spectator; and her restored tranquillity, when she discovers that imagination alone has deceived her, gives a peculiar reflection to the tones of her voice, as she utters the words, ‘ *Come il ciel s’unisce a miei lamenti.*’ Her attitude, when at her lyre, is a study for an artist.

“ What can be more touching than her manner of taking leave of her friend ? The door closes ; she implores Heaven to grant her repose. In the last duo, Madame Malibran

is perfectly electrifying. Her joy on beholding Otello, and her horror at perceiving the dagger, and then her sudden rush towards him, imploring him to plunge it into her bosom—all are the perfections of grace and truth to nature. There is no appearance of force or study. Every movement appears to spring from the inspiration of the moment, and this is the secret of Madame Malibran's captivating power. When she exclaims to Otello, '*E un vile e un traditore*,' her accent excites a thrill of indignation against the monster Iago. To the close—to the last moment of the death-scene, Madame Malibran evinces a divine conception of the part, accompanied by inimitable action, and extraordinary musical power. Never before was such versatility of talent combined in any operatic performer."

BOLOGNA, 1832.

Madame Malibran, accompanied by De Beriot, departed about the end of September for

Bologna, where she was engaged for twenty performances. Some idea of the extraordinary admiration she excited in the last-mentioned place, may be gathered from the following remarks. They are extracted from a letter dated Bologna.

“ It is midnight. The performance at the theatre is just ended. I have just returned home, proud of the impression which Madame Malibran has produced. I never saw an audience so enthusiastic: Madame Malibran was recalled twenty-four times. The approbation was kept up for more than an hour, and during the whole time wreaths of laurel and *immortelles*, which had been brought expressly from Florence, were thrown on the stage. These wreaths were accompanied by slips of paper, on which were inscribed sonnets and odes. In short, such rapturous admiration was never before manifested at Bologna. The inhabitants of that city, who are so remarkable for taste and intelligence, rendered the fullest homage to the

talents of the distinguished cantatrice, and on the same evening they inaugurated her bust in marble, which is placed in the entrance of the theatre."

This was Madame Malibran's last performance in Bologna. When she left the theatre the people ranged themselves in rows, on either side of the streets through which she had to pass, and saluted her with shouts of approbation. On her arrival at her hotel, a crowd collected beneath her windows, and could not be prevailed on to disperse until she had shown herself in the balcony.

After four hours rest, Madame Malibran set off on her journey to Paris and Brussels.

She left Brussels for London in the spring of 1833, to fulfil her engagement at Drury Lane.

#### ENGAGEMENT AT DRURY LANE THEATRE.

Madame Malibran was engaged to perform twenty nights at Drury Lane Theatre in the

season of 1833. The opera made choice of for her first appearance, and which for that purpose was translated into English, was Bellini's Sonnambula. She next appeared in Beethoven's Fidelio, and subsequently in an opera by Chelard, composed expressly for her.

MADAME MALIBRAN'S FACILITY IN THE ACQUISITION OF LANGUAGES.

Madame Malibran could speak fluently French, English, Italian, and Spanish. Her conversation was replete with imagination, originality, and grace. When in rapid conversation her vivacity carried her away, and she could not immediately recollect a particular word in the language she happened to be speaking, she would immediately resort to another language for a term to express her meaning. One day in the warmth of an animated discussion, a friend remarked that her language was party-coloured, like harle-

quin's suit. "True," she replied, "it is p coloured like harlequin, but not masked."

#### ENGAGEMENTS IN ENGLAND AND NAPLES

In 1833 Madame Malibran and De Be were engaged in England to perform at three grand music meetings at Norwich, Worcester, and Liverpool.

At the termination of the three festivals t departed for Naples, where Madame Malib had an engagement which was likely to de her for four months in that city. Norma the favourite opera of the season, and in t piece Malibran's talents shone with rene lustre. In the favourite trio, her manner giving the passage, "*Ah non tremar*" truly sublime; and in the duo, "*In mia n affin tu sei*," she made the theatre reso with applause. Norma was the opera cho for the closing performance of the seas Never was Neapolitan enthusiasm so hig excited. Madame Malibran was called up

the stage no less than twenty successive times at the close of the opera. On her departure from the theatre, all the performers of the orchestra waited at the door to render homage to her; and she was conducted to her hotel amidst the acclamations of the public.

During her stay at Naples, she received proposals from the managers of the Académie Royale and the Italian Opera at New York: and though the terms offered were on the most liberal scale, they were declined. She entered into negotiation with a society of Dilettanti, then forming at Naples, for the purpose of making such arrangements as would tend to confer increased splendour on opera performances.

ENGAGEMENT AT MILAN.

On leaving Naples, De Beriot and Madame Malibran proceeded to Bologna, giving several concerts on their way. From Bologna they repaired to Milan, where Madame Malibran

had been impatiently looked for during several preceding seasons. This arrival there was an event which will never be forgotten by the Milanese, who felt such an earnest desire to see and hear her, that Duke Visconti, the Impresario of La Scala, was compelled to engage her. It was well known that the obstacles in the way of Madame Malibran's engagement rested with Duke Visconti alone, and whenever he showed himself in his box at La Scala, he was received with such marks of public disapproval, that he found himself in some sort forced to conclude an engagement with Madame Malibran. Indeed, an association had been formed for the purpose of opposing Duke Visconti. They proposed to take another theatre, and engage Madame Malibran: two agents were despatched to Bologna for that purpose, but Duke Visconti's agent made the first application, and concluded an engagement with Madame Malibran for a few performances. This brief engagement was the prelude to a

contract for several years, which was signed shortly afterwards.

#### THE PASTISTS.

On Madame Malibran's arrival at Milan, the supporters of Madame Pasta, or, as they were termed, the *Pastists*, organised a sort of cabal against her, on the alleged ground that she had given proofs of vanity and pretension in selecting the character of Norma for her *début*. In Norma, Madame Pasta's talent had shone with most conspicuous lustre; and Madame Malibran would fain have changed the piece selected for her *début*, for she was hurt at the thought of offending Madame Pasta, towards whom she never cherished any other feelings than admiration and esteem. But unluckily all the arrangements for her appearance had been hurriedly made at Bologna, and it was impossible to alter them. Norma had been formally announced; and in Italy a printed opera bill is regarded as a solemn pledge between the

people and the government; it is considered inviolable, and is maintained with scrupulous exactitude.

It may naturally be imagined that this little preliminary warfare between the friends of the prima donnas tended not a little to excite curiosity; but, at the same time, the unfriendly feeling of one portion of the public necessarily augmented the risks and difficulties she had to surmount. Poor Maria! she was fully aware of the critical position in which she stood; she knew that she would be judged severely by the sovereign public of Italy, and these thoughts left her not a moment's repose. The uneasiness she suffered can only be understood by the artist who has felt the anxiety of a *début*, on which the maintenance of a high reputation depends. It is only mediocrity that nurses itself in the full confidence of success. The artist of real genius always feels the necessity of increased exertion; and on the day of her *début* at Milan, Maria Malibran thought within

herself, "This evening I must be sublime, otherwise the reputation I have carried as it were by chance, will all vanish in a moment."

## DEBUT AT LA SCALA.

On the day of Madame Malibran's *début* at Milan, the pit was filled as early as two o'clock in the afternoon.

When she entered her *camerino* to dress for her part, Madame Malibran was so overcome by her feelings that she burst into a flood of tears.

Meanwhile, the hour for the commencement of the performance arrived. The buzz of impatience which had for some time circulated among the Dilettanti in the pit, changed to a tumult of approbation when the *ritornella* announced the entrance of Madame Malibran. The first tones of her voice produced a strong excitement. Throughout, the audience manifested their approbation only by a sort of mur-

mur, indicative of their fear of losing a or syllable which fell from the *Can Divina*; but when she came to the te *Ah non tremar!* she was interrupted torrent of applause. It was called for a se time, and Madame Malibran repeated it an accent and an expression which will be effaced from the memory of the Milanes

HONOURS RENDERED TO MADAME MALIBRAN  
HER DEPARTURE FROM MILAN.

The operatic annals of no country pr any example of a triumph similar to enjoyed by Madame Malibran, on the eve of her first performance at Milan. At the clusion of the opera she was recalled no than thirty times; and each time wre bouquets, trinkets, and sonnets, were th on the stage. When she returned home found the gardens of Visconti Palace, w she resided, brilliantly illuminated. A triphal arch, with a complimentary inscrip

was erected at the entrance of the principal avenue. Upwards of twenty thousand persons assembled round the palace, and the orchestra and chorus of the opera performed a cantata, composed for the occasion by Madame Panizza. Madame Malibran's feelings were quite over-powered by these marks of favour. She repeatedly went into her balcony, and by graceful and expressive gestures thanked her numerous admirers.

#### VISIT TO LONDON IN 1834.

Madame Malibran and De Beriot left Milan for Paris and Brussels, and from the latter place proceeded to London, where they arrived in June 1834. The object of their visit to London was to assist at the concert of M. Manuel Garcia, the brother of Madame Malibran. This concert took place at the residence of Mrs. Caruther, in Grafton-street.

## RETURN TO ITALY.

After passing a few days in London, Mad Malibran and her husband returned to Italy having engagements to fulfil in Sinagaglia, Lucca, Milan, and Naples. They travelled rapidly, and reached Sinagaglia on the 1st of July. Madame Malibran now enjoyed a colossal reputation throughout Italy. She was treated with the honour due to a princess. In every little town or village through which she passed, crowds pressed round her carriage to get a sight of her.

Old Cardinal Albani was a rapturous admirer of the talent of Madame Malibran, and he used even to attend the opera rehearsals.

## DEPARTURE FOR LUCCA IN AUGUST 1834

On the 11th of August 1834, Madame Malibran left Sinagaglia for Lucca. She

now become the idol of Italy, and nothing was thought of or talked about, but the *Cantanta Divina*. The enthusiasm she excited was such, as can exist only among a people who, like the Italians, are deprived of commercial and political excitement, and to whom every species of occupation and amusement, save those derived from the fine arts, is limited or prohibited.

The Italians, whose political feelings and enthusiasm are repressed by the yoke of a foreign domination, turns to the charms of music and poetry for resource and consolation.

At Lucca, Madame Malibran was received with the same *furore* as at Milan and Bologna. On the last evening of her performance, the people unharnessed the horses from her carriage, and drew her home in triumph.

She afterwards returned to Milan, where she performed twelve evenings. On this occasion she entered into an engagement with

Duke Visconti for about one hundred and eighty performances, at the rate of two thousand five hundred francs each.

#### ACCIDENT AT NAPLES.

Madame Malibran once more left Milan and repaired to Naples, where she concluded an engagement with the Operatic Society, which had just then been established in the city. Her performances at San Carlos were a renewed series of triumphs, and to describe them would only be a repetition of what has already been said. One circumstance, however, which occurred during Madame Malibran's visit to Naples on this occasion, deserves to be noticed. During the festivities of the carnival, as Madame Malibran was driving along a street of Toledo in an open carriage, her horses unfortunately took fright, and she was thrown out of the vehicle. By this accident she suffered a dislocation of the wrist, and her performances were interrupted.

quence, for a few nights, suspended ; and when she again appeared she had her arm in a sling. It is a proof of her singular talent and address, that she so effectually concealed the disablement of her right arm, that scarcely any of the audience, who were not previously aware of her accident, perceived it.

VISIT TO VENICE—DEATH OF THE EMPEROR

FRANCIS.

On the 4th of March, 1835, the Neapolitan season having closed, Madame Malibran and De Beriot proceeded to Venice.

When they arrived at Bologna, the intelligence of the death of the Emperor Francis retarded for several weeks the six performances for which Madame Malibran was engaged at Venice.

As her gondola approached the city of the doges, bands of music announced her coming. Immense crowds of persons lined the quays. When Madame Malibran attempted to cross

the Place of St. Mark, the crowd became so dense that she was induced to seek refuge in the church. But the church itself was speedily filled, and it was with difficulty that she could make her way through the crowded streets of Venice to her hotel.

At Venice she played in *Otello*, *Cenerentola*, and *Norma*, and she concluded her performances by an act of benevolence. She played the *Sonnambula* for the benefit of a poor impresario, who on that occasion opened a theatre, which now bears the name of the *Teatro Malibran*.

MADAME MALIBRAN'S APPEARANCE IN INEZ DE  
CASTRO—PRESENT FROM THE DUKE OF LUCCA.

At the close of their engagements in Venice, Madame Malibran and De Beriot returned to Paris, and from thence proceeded to Brussels, where they remained a fortnight. They next visited London for the musical season of 1835. At its close they again departed for Italy.

Madame Malibran appeared at Lucca as the heroine of Persiani's opera of Inez de Castro. The Duke of Lucca was so charmed by her performance of this character, that he presented to her a magnificent brooch set with fine pearls and brilliants, and in the letter which accompanied the gift, expressed not only admiration of her talent, but sincere esteem for her character.

#### THE CHOLERA IN ITALY.

Madame Malibran was in the midst of her triumphs when the cholera broke out: first at Genoa, next at Leghorn, then at Florence. Terror spread rapidly. The theatres and all places of amusement were deserted, and *cordons sanitaires* were established on all points, except on the road to Carrara, which was less frequented than the rest. Madame Malibran was expected at Milan in fulfilment of her engagements; she therefore formed the resolution of travelling by a path leading across the

Alps, to avoid entering Genoa, where the cholera was raging, and where they would have been detained by a quarantine of twenty days.

On arriving at Carrara, they hired twenty-five men, eight oxen, and six mules, to convey two carriages across the Apennines. They advanced only nine miles in the space of two days, having to pass ravines, torrents, and pointed rocks, and sometimes to make their way through villages, whose narrow streets scarcely afforded sufficient space for a carriage. They encountered indescribable difficulties.

Madame Malibran rode on horseback a little in advance of the cavalcade; and nothing could exceed the courage and spirit with which she bore the perils and fatigues of the journey. They were escorted by a civic guard, which constantly kept within a hundred paces of the carriages. They reached Milan in the beginning of September 1835, having by their weary and perilous journey succeeded in avoiding those *cordons sanitaires*.

DONIZETTI'S MARIA STUARDO.

Madame Malibran appeared at Milan in Donizetti's opera of Maria Stuardo. This piece was prohibited after the third performance, on account of some political allusions, to which Madame Malibran imparted twofold effect by her emphatic manner of delivering them.

During this visit to Milan, a celebrated Italian sculptor executed a marble bust of Madame Malibran. The artist was engaged upon it for several months, but he finally succeeded in producing a striking resemblance. This bust is now at Ixelles.

MARRIAGE OF MADAME MALIBRAN AND DE  
BERIOT.

In the spring they left Milan to return to Paris, where they were united in marriage on the 29th of March. The witnesses of the mar-

riage ceremony, were the Marquis de Louvois, Baron Perignon, MM. Auber and Troupenas. The newly-married couple spent the evening at the residence of M. Troupenas, where a party was invited to meet them, consisting of the most distinguished musical professors and amateurs then in the French capital. Madame de Beriot sang the finale from the *Sonnambula*, with a degree of animation which was very naturally inspired by the increased happiness of her position. De Beriot, too, contributed not a little to the charms of the evening's entertainments by his exquisite performance of several of his favourite pieces. In short, this delightful concert, together with the happy event in honour of which it was given, will never be effaced from the recollection of those who were present at it.

#### VISIT TO BRUSSELS—SERENADES—CONCERTS.

On the day after their marriage, M. and Madame de Beriot left Paris for Brussels,

where they spent several days in the bosom of their family.

When they arrived at their villa at Ixelles, several serenades were performed in honour of them: one by the band of the regiment of Royal Guards, another by the orchestra of the Harmonic Society, and a third by the Vocal Society. All were eager to testify their feelings of satisfaction at the union of two persons who seemed perfectly formed to render each other happy.

During their short stay at Brussels, M. and Madame de Beriot devoted their talents to the service of humanity, by giving a concert for the benefit of the Polish refugees. There being no concert-room at Brussels sufficiently spacious for the purpose, the performance took place in the church of the Augustines, which was likewise much too small for the numbers who attended.

Some evenings afterwards, in compliance with the public wish, they gave a concert at the

great theatre. It was exceedingly crowded; the public of Brussels being anxious, not only to enjoy the pleasure of hearing their delightful performances, but also to mark their admiration of the generous aid they had rendered to the poor Polish exiles. They were greeted with the most enthusiastic plaudits, and were even escorted to their carriage amidst shouts of *bravo!* Such a feeling of excitement was never witnessed on any similar occasion in Brussels.

SHORT VISIT TO LONDON—MADAME MALIBRAN'S  
FALL FROM HER HORSE — CONSEQUENT ILL-  
NESS.

About the end of April, Madame Malibran and her husband again visited London, and returned to Brussels at the end of July. It was during that interval that Madame Malibran had the misfortune to fall from her horse. On her return to Brussels, Madame Malibran

bore on her countenance the marks of the contusions she had received; and the state of her health altogether, excited uneasiness in the minds of her friends. The only cause assigned by Madame Malibran for the contusions she had received was, that she had fallen down stairs, in consequence of her foot having become entangled in her riding-habit.

Unfavourable symptoms soon began to show themselves. Her temper became irritable, and she was frequently melancholy. When roused from the fits of depression, her gaiety seemed to be the result of excitement rather than of cheerfulness. Her condition gave serious alarm to her family, whose fears were, however, somewhat allayed by the idea that her pregnancy might possibly be the cause of the alteration observable in her. Two medical professors, who were in attendance on her, concurred in the propriety of bleeding her. After the bleeding, she certainly became less excitable, and appeared to enjoy improved health.

On the 12th of October, Madame Malibran accompanied her husband to Liege, where he was engaged to perform. Whilst Madame Malibran was listening to De Beriot's performance on this occasion, her feelings were moved in a degree scarcely to be expected, considering that she was in the constant habit of hearing him.

A few days afterwards they gave another concert, at which Madame Malibran sang the romance of The Brigand, which she had just then composed. She sang it with such deep and impassioned expression, that at its conclusion the whole of the audience in the pit rose *en masse* to applaud her.

#### PERFORMANCE AT AIX-LA-CHAPELLE.

A deputation was sent by the inhabitants of Aix-la-Chapelle to request that Madame Malibran and De Beriot would perform in that city. There was only a German opera company at

Aix-la-Chapelle; but Madame Malibran made an innovation which was crowned with success. She sang her part in Bellini's *Sonnambula* in Italian, whilst the other performers sang their parts in German. Madame Malibran was never heard to greater advantage than on this occasion. Every time she appeared on the stage, she was saluted by a flourish from a military band stationed in the orchestra, and the same honour was rendered to De Beriot.

The *Sonnambula* was performed a second time, in compliance with the urgent wish of the public. Madame Malibran was exceedingly ill and low-spirited on the evening of this second performance. It seemed as though she felt a presentiment that it was the close of her operatic triumphs.

MADAME MALIBRAN'S RETURN TO IXELLES—HER EXTRAORDINARY PASSION FOR MUSICAL COMPOSITION—DEPARTURE FOR THE MANCHESTER MUSIC MEETING.

From Aix-la-Chapelle Madame Malibran and De Beriot returned to Ixelles, where they remained two days. They then proceeded to Lille, where arrangements had been made for a concert; on the morning after which they set off for Roissy, an estate about seven leagues from Paris, which they had recently purchased. On her arrival at Roissy, Madame Malibran's love for musical composition became almost a mania. She sat constantly at her piano, from which she could not be roused, either by the solicitations of her husband, or by the desire of seeing the beautiful domain of Roissy, which she now visited for the first time. Her head and her mind needed repose, and for this reason De Beriot had prevailed on her to pass a short time at Roissy. Her

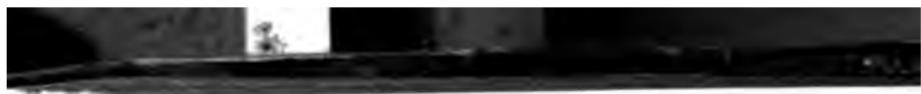
husband thought the pure air would speedily restore her to health; but, instead of enjoying the country and seeking healthful recreation, she devoted herself assiduously to her musical compositions. At Roissy she composed her last romances.

After a short time, Madame Malibran proceeded to England, to fulfil her engagement at the Manchester music meeting.





## L E T T E R S.



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## L E T T E R S.

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[THE following are translations of selected parts of Madame Malibran's correspondence.]

TO MONSIEUR LE BARON D—.

You must have been fully aware that I did not refuse you admittance to-day. You perhaps know I went straight from rehearsal to dine at mamma's, and from thence came home at half-past eight, and retired to bed directly. I was so amused, I was really fearful of drinking

too deeply of the cup of pleasure at one time. I therefore was determined to mortify myself . . . . . You see me in imagination casting down my eyes . . . . . You go doubtlessly to-morrow (or rather I should say to-day) to the concert? . . . . . Who, I wonder, will come and ask me to have the goodness to sing? . . . . . Upon my word, if no one does me that favour, I shall coolly get up and go and . . . . . place myself at the piano, and consent to sing, in order to please the unanimous desire of . . . . . myself! What do you think of this plan? I think it's something new.

One thing is certain, my follies are nothing new to you: unfortunately you are well accustomed to them. You, who are Mister Useful, do you believe, that if I put on a dress, such as the one I wore with the cap, or if I—or else if . . . . . Well, what do you think?

You are a second Madame Rossi, as a critic of the toilette. Now don't advise me as Iago

does . . . . . Adieu, you may come in the guise of a letter, and see me this morning.

M. F. MALIBRAN.

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TO THE SAME.

Having to attend a grand rehearsal to-day I cannot receive you at one. I must put it off till half-past three. You, I think, must be content with me. *I* am highly so with *myself*.

My whole being feels improved by the quiet life I have led for the last three days. Nothing has vexed or annoyed me. My voice is much fresher. I will not, however, go so far as to say that I have slept well. No; I have been agitated all night. But what is this compared to eternity? I must, however, descend from Olympus, and I'll tell you why; I must go and dress for rehearsal.

Madame de Merlin is very good to come and

see me to-day. I shall receive her with open arms. I will not utter the slightest reproach, but load her with kindness. Such is my vengeance. You recollect what *La Cenerentola* says, "E sara mia vendetta . . . . il lor . . . . perdonata."

If you were the audience, you'd say "Bravo!"

M. F. Malibran presents her affectionate compliments to the "Good Devil."

TO THE SAME.

Calais, 10th April, 1830. Ten o'clock at night.

No power shall withhold me, no pain shall deter me ; in a word, nothing on earth shall prevent me from writing to my dear friend P—  
..... Friend P—, my excellent friend, you must be fully conscious that if you were deceitful, (which I am sure you are not,) you would be the most dangerous person in the world, for you possess the most

extraordinary powers of persuasion. You have a way of saying things which carries conviction with it; every word which falls from you is implicitly believed by him or her to whom it is addressed. If a person, or rather I should say, if I had met with a person who had possessed your character, I should have become mad, raving mad, long ago.

Let us turn to another subject. I like you: such is the first feeling which emanates from my heart when I think of you.

I slept well all night, with my feet in Madame L——'s lap, stretched out as comfortably as if I had been in bed. They tell me we shall have a fine day to-morrow for my voyage to Dover. Heaven grant it.

Take great care of yourself; don't fatigue yourself too much; remember you are "*indispensable*" to your friends, and that to me you are *absolutely necessary*; one only meets twice, or rather I should say once, at most, a being like yourself: who can understand and sympathise,

—who can feel for another, — who can put up with self-denial, and who can console and pour a balm into the agitated bosom of affliction. How often have I felt this, and . . .

• • • • •

My sermon's done.

Let me know all: you understand. Heaven knows whether you will decipher the nonsense I have scribbled. My arm is painful. I am going to bed. Let me know whether I am to execute any commissions for you.

Have you forgotten anything which I can do to serve you?

There is one thing certain, a letter will always find me if addressed to me in London, where I shall remain for some time anxiously expecting to hear from you, and ever ready to prove how truly I am your devoted

MARIA.

## TO THE SAME.

Calais, April 11th, 1830.

I have not yet started ; the weather was so tempestuous, I did not choose to risk my *bones*. To-morrow will perhaps be finer, but whether it is so or not, I shall not start, as I have promised to remain to sing at a charity subscription concert, on condition I should be allowed to go round and make a collection ; for this reason I trust no one will come without money in their pockets. The poor, I hope, will not lose by this arrangement. The delay is of no great consequence, as I am in no hurry, having nothing to do just yet in London.

Calais, Monday.

It is splendid weather,—just the weather for *riding* over the earth, or over the sea. But to go to Dover: bah ! this evening the concert

is to take place. We shall have a good laugh. I'll write to you all about it. The president is coming in due form to thank me for my proposed exertions.

Last night we had at the hotel M—— the very questionable pleasure of hearing a singer. I beg her pardon, a *cantatrice*! (I should say of the streets,) who was brought to the hotel by some English people for the purpose of regaling their ears with sweet music. Their door was just opposite to mine. Two ladies, who had come expressly to *hear* her, were shown into my room by mistake. So I instantly sat down to the piano, and played the accompaniment to the song which the beautiful siren was at that moment singing; the effect was very odd. To her it seemed like a distant echo, to me it appeared like the squalling of a tortured cat. This brought to my recollection certain scenes of old, which contrasted strangely in my mind's eye. Adieu till the evening, when I will again take up my pen, and tell

you everything which can possibly interest you.

I promised to write. Well, I must inform you, in the first place, that my name had such an effect upon the Calaisians, that the directors of the proposed subscription concert found it would be advantageous to admit all who chose to come; so at two o'clock to-day it was announced that a "Public concert for the benefit of the poor would take place this evening at the theatre, when a collection would be made by Madame Malibran."

Poor creatures! I understand they have suffered dreadfully. I am delighted to think I have the power of doing them good. Good-bye till after the concert.

I have just come in—you would have been delighted to see my reception. The good people of this place are in ecstasies. At eight o'clock I was at my post. Extraordinary to say, that though the concert was only announced publicly at *two o'clock*, I succeeded in

collecting three hundred and eighty-seven francs, over and above what was taken at the doors—an enormous sum, considering all things.

After the first act I went round. As soon as I had done this, the mayor came on the stage, and having made really a very good speech before the whole audience, he crowned me with a wreath of flowers—gave me a bouquet—delivered a second complimentary address, and ended by reading out aloud some verses which had been written in my honour. After all this, the people began to applaud in the most vociferous manner for several minutes, and invoked all sorts of blessings on my head. So enthusiastic were they, that they cheered me all the way home. Adieu; if it is not fine, I shall not embark to-morrow.

Tuesday morning.

I don't start to-day; the weather is still too stormy. They are, however, determined I shall not find my sojourn dull. I am asked to a

*soirée* at M. Pigault de Beaupr  s (cousin to Pigault-le-Brun) this evening. We shall have dancing, in which I hope to join. I promise you not to fatigue myself, and to return home just as early as if I expected to meet . . . . . You see I don't forget your friends. I am dying to arrive in London, where I expect to find letters from you. I hope to go by to-morrow's mail packet-boat. I close my letter, having nothing but the *old story* to tell you. But stay—I will write no more stuff.

Good bye,

My best, my sincerest friend.

---

TO THE SAME.

Bristol, on my way to Exeter.

We start to-morrow morning for Exeter, my dear M. D., where I am engaged for eight concerts, including those which I am to give, on my way back, at Bath and Bristol. On the

29th we shall be *en route* for Paris; on the 26th we shall be at Calais. Pray send me a letter addressed "Hotel Meurice," wherein (after saying all those pretty little things you so well understand) you must tell me the name of the street, and the number of the house, &c. &c., that you have had the goodness to take for us. If you have not yet secured one, pray do so directly, and if . . . . . it's just the same. Well, then, to finish that which I have not commenced, I will terminate this scrawl by telling you you are a sad wretch for not answering my letters. I have written to you from Gloucester, Chester, and from all corners of the earth; but it appears this year is not favourable to those who dedicate themselves to literature, to the fine arts, or to those who, like myself, give themselves up in the most fervent manner to epistolary correspondence . . . . Hem ! ! ! no nonsense. Enough of chit-chat. I hope M. Laurent will be kind to me, and make up for all the bad conduct of him to whom I shall

in future say, *à la porte*.\* Not so bad from one unaccustomed to punning. Do you know what annoys me when I come to the conclusion of my epistles? It is, that I am forced to sign the name of Malibran at the end of a string of other nonsense.

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## TO THE SAME.

We have followed the current, that is to say, we have arrived one day sooner than we meant. To account for this, I must tell you we had a remarkably short passage, and a delightful one. The tide was favourable, the wind was fair, the . . . . . In short, in consequence of all these circumstances, we start by the *mail-poste* to-morrow, Saturday, the 24th, and shall arrive on Monday, the 26th;—do you hear that? Open your great little eyes. Mum. I wish to make my first appearance in the Gazza.

\* Meant as a pun on the name of La Porte.

What do you say to that? My heart jumps with joy at the idea of again seeing the dear brat. I have been as sick as a dog, in spite of the favourable passage we have had. I am delighted with the lodgings. Bravo! I should like to have my sister with me. I will tell you hereafter—how and when? Don't say a word about it. Will you accept the humble prostrations of the most happy but foolish Mimiband? I wish to be thus called in future whenever I am in good spirits. I try to make you feel so in thus writing to you intelligibly, for not a single word can I make out in your letters. *Dixit.*

Till presently—until Monday.

What joy it will be to meet after such a long absence!

M. F. MALIBRAN.

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## MADAME GARCIA TO THE SAME.

Paris, May 1st.

Sir,

Persuaded that Maria attends to everything you tell her, I venture to beg of you to suggest to her that she ought to reserve her strength and spirits for the theatre, and that she ought not to accept dinner invitations. You are aware Lalande has not been successful, and consequently Maria will have to make her appearance fifteen days earlier than she originally anticipated. She will probably be called upon to sing much oftener than she has stipulated for in her engagement. If she therefore gives herself up wholly to her profession, this will be a golden year to her; but if she insists on going about and exerting herself as she did in Paris, she will throw away the gifts of fortune. I have taken the liberty of enclosing a letter for my son, because I do not wish them

to know that Manuel was one of the *heroes*, and on your return I shall repay you the expense I put you to for postage, by showing you gratuitously a *Calvary* I am now dressing out, and for each sight of which I should otherwise charge you twopence. It is really very pretty, and I do not doubt you will desire to see it daily; so you see the saving to you will be considerable. Don't, however, trouble yourself about it. I shall keep you a place in the *first tier*.

I wish you would also tell Maria to ask the same sum for singing at the meetings which Pasta demanded; the exact amount she can easily find out.

Adieu, my dear baron; I pray you to excuse my *little bad French*. You may readily suppose I am very dull now that both my children have left me, otherwise I should more gaily assure you how truly I am your very obedient servant,

J. S. GARCIA.

FROM MADAME MALIBRAN TO THE SAME.

10th of May.

Certainly, my dear friend, negligence has not been the cause of my not writing often. No: you know how well I like you, and how anxious I am to prove it, therefore I do not fear you will accuse me of forgetting you. Lalande having failed, I am up to my neck in business. A concert in the morning, two or three more in the evening, and the same thing over again the next day, not even excepting the nights I sing at the opera. I never enjoyed better health. I am now quite strong. My voice as clear in the morning as in the afternoon; it is never hoarse or husky. Madame Levestre takes as much care of me as if I were her own child. I ought to thank God and the good Madame Levestre for the care One takes of me invisibly, and the visible improvement of my health under the tender care of the other. On Wednesday I go to Bath,

after the concert. I shall arrive on Thursday, at nine A.M., and sing two pieces. At *one* o'clock I start for Bristol, where I shall arrive in less than an hour: there I play in the third act of *Otello* with Donzelli. I pocket one hundred and fifty guineas, and arrive in London next morning. Is not that delightful, "very delightful!" I have received a letter from the charming Madame D——; she asks me after you. I have a concert to attend this morning. I play the first act of *Il Matrimonio*, and the whole of *Tancredi*, this evening, for the benefit of . . . . . Lablache is quite the *rage*. I send you this short letter to convince you I am well, and embrace you as I like you.

MARIA.

---

TO THE SAME.

Sidney's Hotel, Bath, August 11.

Yes! I admit it. I have not written to you for two months, and I'll tell you why. First of

all, I must inform you, I never wrote so much in all my life as I have done since you left us. I am very idle. I detest writing, and it requires all my best resolution to fulfil my promise of addressing you often. For some time I did so regularly, but when you had left Toulon and reached Algiers, I thought there was little use in writing until you returned. This reason, added to my proverbial laziness, took away all desire to address you; but as a kind of set-off, in a fit of remorse I desired Madame Levestre to mention me in all her letters to you. I have been very nearly visiting the resting place of my ancestors: but Fate whispered, "She is kind—she is unfortunate. She shall live. Vivat!" She turned my bed round, and when Death came to take me by the head, he found to his great astonishment he was at my feet. Thus I was spared from making a journey to one of the extremities of the other world.

I am now quite well. Bath agrees with me. I remain until the 25th of August. Thanks to

my excellent and sincere friend, Dr. B—, I am in a completely restored state of health. I now continually display, as you say, the pink and white in my complexion. You must love this man, who has saved my life as much by skill and promptitude, as by *fatherly* kindness. You ought to like him, for he resembles you. I have written to-day a letter of eight pages to Monsieur de Lamartine. The pleasure of addressing him has led me on, perhaps, to express myself at too great a length; but he is indulgent, and will pardon the outpourings of a young heart anxious to prove its sincerity. My wrist aches with writing so much. So adieu, my dear friend. I wrote to Manuel before he started from Paris, to which he might have answered before he left. Pray bring me some pretty little *bijou*, such as the head of a Bedouin Arab, or other pretty toy, to ornament my Malibranian seigniory.

## TO THE SAME.

Birmingham, October 1st, 1830.

My dear Friend,

When I think that in twenty-four days more I shall revisit my noble country, my heart leaps with joy. Fancy tells me I shall see the faces of Frenchmen changed; I picture to myself their countenances beaming with liberty, their eyes lit up by a holy fire, which bespeaks a glorious conviction of having done a good deed. All this seems clearer in my imagination than on paper, weak Mercury of my thoughts. Dear friend, you must procure me a house . . .

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I have become more intrepid than ever, since France has once more replaced the old flowers, long dried in the attic, by promising buds of a sprouting nobility. They tell me all is not finished. I would willingly lose one arm in such a cause, and fancy I had gained two in

having thus assisted in supporting the laws of nature. I begin to warm on the subject; so adieu. Enough of gossip.

MARIA.

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TO THE SAME.

This 7th of March, two o'clock in the morning.

How can I sufficiently acknowledge your goodness?— how find words to express to you my gratitude for your kindness? Don't mistake my meaning. It is not because you have taken me to ride with you on horseback. It is because you exert yourself with fervour to obtain for me every pleasure I can desire. It is for this goodness I must ever be your silent debtor, for I am unequal to speak my thanks, much less write them. You have no idea how sincerely joyed I am in seeing you happy. I am even more anxious for your welfare than my own; for your first happiness

consists in seeing me content, and my mind is a reflection of your own. Am I not right? I was anxious to repay you for your goodness, and please myself at the same time; so I came home early from M. de la Buillerie's concert, hoping to have a chat with you . . . . . I found no one. Heaven knows what life you had to enable you to get through so much business . . . . . Bad news! . . . . . Is it that I am right in supposing your headache proceeds from . . . . .

Go and see your patron, and have a long chat with him. Yes, without doubt . . . . . come and see me during my dinner-time.

Your sincere friend,

MARIA.

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TO THE SAME.

Never mind, you are a good devil; don't think I am going, like yourself, to fill my

letter with compliments. My flattery is reduced to two words. You are a good devil, and a kind busy-body, (with one's feelings,) by way of parenthesis. Truth compels me to admit that you have a good heart; at least so I believe. That's all. I reduce all I feel to a single jam lozenge, that is to say, to a single word. You are sincere and devoted. According to my ideas, they are the most grateful epithets I can apply to you, and you merit them.

I give you permission !!! to come for a *moment* at three o'clock.

Adieu ; they are waiting for me.

MARIA.

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TO MONSIEUR LOUIS VIARDOT.

Rome, June 11th, 1832.

It is a fate which all must look forward to, and, when it arrives, endure with philosophy.

EFFECTS OF THE THREE GLORIOUS DAYS. 195

In so short a time to see so many persons carried off, and amongst others our best friend and my father — ! I only learned this dreadful misfortune at three o'clock this afternoon, thanks to the French ambassadress, who gave me, the day before yesterday, the newspapers containing an account of the counter-revolution. To-day she broke the unfortunate news to Charles in private. I soon discovered it; they vainly tried to hide it from me.

My poor friend ! what anguish I feel ! Misery, like a poniard, stabs me a thousand times in a single instant. I still refuse to believe it till I hear it officially confirmed. I am writing to my mother, but do not dare to allude to the subject. You are aware I never answered the letter, which neither you nor I could believe came from her; nevertheless I have had my pen in my hand a thousand times. I could no longer resist writing to ask after them, and since yesterday, when I learned the dreadful scenes that are acting in Paris

just now, my inquietude has increased a thousandfold. I pictured to myself that my poor father was mixed up in these horrors, and was just about to address him, when I was told the dreadful news.

At all events, let me know all about yourself and Leon. Tell us (for we have not heard from you for two months) whether you have not been in danger. If the cholera or the revolution have been able to carry off the other . . . . . Tell me I have not to deplore the loss of a father. Louis, for the last two months I have not received one letter from Madame L——; not a *single* line. Make her write to me, addressed No. 45, Piazza della Minerva. I impatiently wait to hear from you; I am in a state bordering on distraction, and anticipate a line from you to soothe my agonies. Unfortunately I cannot get off an engagement I have made here, to play three times a week for one month; that is, twelve performances. The manager has expended a good deal on new

scenery and dresses, and augmented his company to support me. You know my heart. Do not blame me. The day after St. Peter's, I appear in Otello. The singers are all bad. Embrace for me my mother, my brother, and —. It is not possible—the newspapers must have given a false report.

Your sincere friend.

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TO COUNSELLOR PAROLA.

Milan.

My dear Counsellor,

I write, although I am by no means sure that the post is starting; but I can no longer refrain from letting you know we are all well. With our usual rapidity we arrived at Modena by nine o'clock, in time to go and see the Sonnambula, with our friend the Marchioness Carandini; after the theatre, we immediately went to bed. On Tuesday we flew off

post, and arrived in Bologna by one o'clock: we were here also in time to see Norma. I came from it more convinced *than ever*, that the report of this opera being unsuccessful (which we heard in Milan) was false. Pasta was received with great applause. After the cavatina (which she certainly sang most wonderfully) she was called for *five* times. After the trio, twice, and warmly greeted whenever she appeared; twice after the duet in the second act, and that with Donzelli was also encored.

At the end of the performance she had to come forward twice. You see by these details, which are strictly true, how malicious were the reports of Pasta's having failed to please. Whenever they again tell you this, refer to my letter, and believe my version to be the true one. Between the acts I went round to see Pasta, who received me most graciously. She asked me after the Duke and Duchess, and thanked me, in the name of the inhabitants

of Milan, for having favoured them by singing there. It is impossible to be more amiable than Pasta. I therefore beg of you to contradict, on my authority, those who say she has been unsuccessful, and tell them of the triumph (in my presence) she gained.

I pray you, my dear counsellor, to present our compliments to the good Duchess, to the Duke, and to the amiable Baroness Battaglia, about whom I had a long chat with the Princess Herculani.

A thousand remembrances to your wife, a thousand kisses to your children, and a shake of the hand for yourself, from

Your affectionate  
M. MALIBRAN.

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TO BARON PERIGNON.

Milan, Dec. 13th, 1835.

Amiable Sir—dear Judge—

You have made my mouth water by speaking to me of playing in Paris. It is true, they have made me an offer (through our friend Troupitenas) to appear twelve times in the month of April next. You are not perhaps aware that by the end of March I shall have gone through sixty-five performances since the 15th of September; and that all I can snatch for pleasure or repose is a single month, including the time I must spend in travelling: that I have to go through a London season, which is the most fatiguing of all: that I have to study two new operas in English, and refresh my memory in two more. Certainly, when I reappear in Paris, I should like to do so fresh and well, and not jaded by two fatiguing seasons at Milan, and a journey across ice-clad

mountains, with heaps of snow, which threaten avalanches at every moment; and obstacles which, together with the wretched posting, render the undertaking tedious and wearying; not to speak of the amiable brigands of whom they recount each day some charming exploit, some interesting murder.

No! the dear Parisians shall only hear me when I shall have had a full month's repose, to enjoy the anticipation of again appearing before them;—a whole month dedicated to a single fear—the fear of not pleasing them as much as formerly.

Am I not right? do you not agree with me? I am grateful to the rumour which spoke of my being engaged, since it procured me the pleasure of receiving a letter from you. Try and find out some news as an excuse for a much longer letter. Tell me about Madame —, *tell her I love her with all my heart*, and make her add a little “I love you,” at the bottom of your next.

Charles would kiss her beautiful hands, if she would allow him. Will you undertake this commission for him, and accept our affectionate compliments?

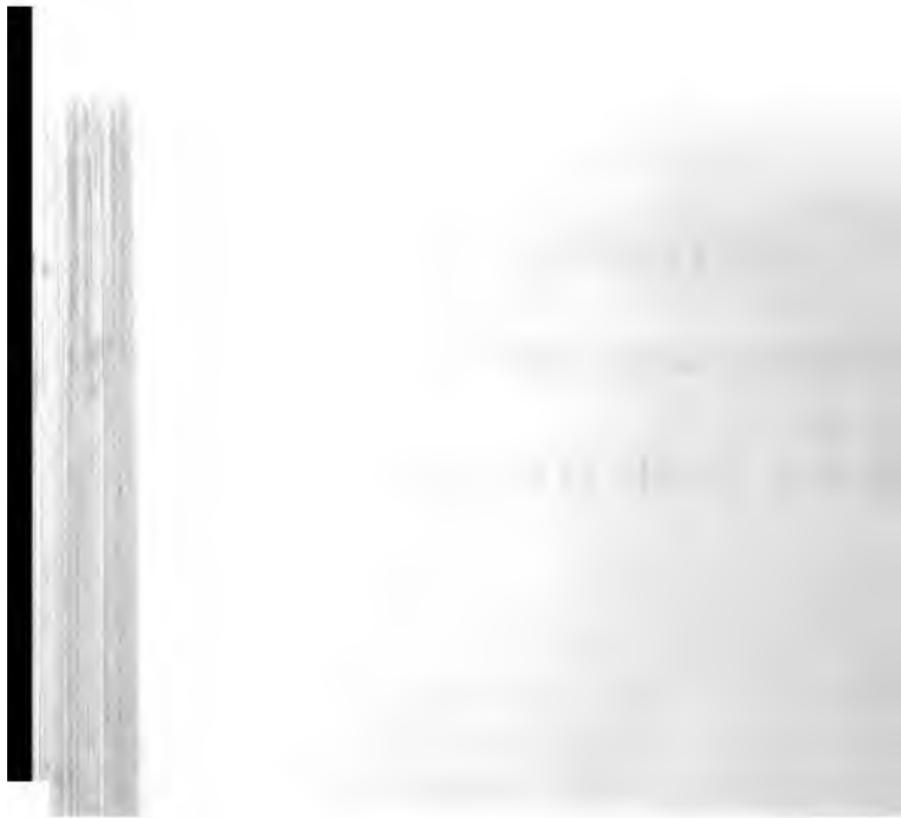
I am bold to say that in me you have a true and grateful friend,

MARIA GARCIA.

**THE PROGRESS**

**OF THE**

**ENGLISH OPERA.**



THE  
PROGRESS OF THE ENGLISH OPERA:  
WITH NOTICES OF  
MALIBRAN'S PERFORMANCES  
ON THE ENGLISH STAGE.

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THE age of Elizabeth must be referred to, as that in which dramatic music in England was first established as a public entertainment. The plays of the time, especially those of Shakspeare, abound with instances of the introduction, not only of songs, duets, and other harmonized pieces of vocal music, but of descriptive music for instruments. The masques,

however, must be recorded as the first step in this country to the opera. These were produced for the amusement of the court; and, although occasionally resorted to many years previously, never flourished to such an extent as when Ben Jonson enriched them with his genius and scholarship. This prolific writer furnished thirty-one of these productions, besides half a dozen entertainments of a similar character. Several of these were performed by the chief nobility of both sexes at the court of James I. and Charles I., the queen and her ladies in more than one instance taking the principal characters. That of "The Vision of Delight," presented at court in Christmas 1617, was the first attempt at a regular opera; it being written in recitative, with occasional songs, dances, and chorusses. As some idea of this early performance may be interesting, we copy its commencement.

THE SCENE—*A street, in perspective of fair buildings discovered.*

*Delight is seen to come as afar off, accompanied with Grace, Love, Harmony, Revel, Sport, Laughter, and followed by Wonder.*

*Stilo Recitativo.*

*Delight.* Let us play and dance and sing,

Let us now turn every sort

Of the pleasures of the spring

To the graces of a court,

From air, from cloud, from dreams, from toys,

To sounds, to sense, to love, to joys ;

Let your shows be new as strange,

Let them oft and sweetly vary ;

Let them haste so to their change,

As the seers may not tarry.

Too long t'expect the pleasing'at sight,

Doth take away from the delight.

[*Here the first Anti-masque entered. A she-monster delivered of six Burratines,\* that dance with six Pantaloons : which done—*

*Yet hear what your Delight doth pray ;*

*All sour and sullen looks away,*

*That are the servants of the day ;*

\* Burlesque female characters, clothed in a peculiar stuff of that name.

To help *The*

[*Night rises slow*]

See, see, her

Are all of fl

A train of lig

This night, in

The brain, not

But all awake

And those to n

[*By this time the nig*

*ing over the place,*

*Night. Break, Phant'sie*

And spread th

Now all thy figu

And various st

Create of airy for

It must have bloo

And though it be s

*Chorus. Yet let it like an and*

This is the first example of an English *libretto*, and undoubtedly the best. All Ben's predecessors put together could not have produced the genuine poetry of some of the lines we have just quoted. But this is a small portion only of the masque, the dramatic character and the machinery of which are still unrivalled by modern opera writers. It was followed, on Saturday, February 22nd, by another on a similar plan, entitled "A Masque presented in the house of the Right Honourable the Lord Hay, by divers of noble quality his friends, for the entertainment of Monsieur le Baron de Tour, Extraordinary Ambassador for the French King;" and by several others. The scenes and machinery were usually the work of Inigo Jones, the architect: and when a professional singer was employed, "that most excellent tenor voice and exact singer, (her Majesty's servant, Master Jo. Allen,)" as Ben Jonson styles him in the "Masque of Queens, was resorted to. The dances were supplied by

Master Thomas Giles, and Master Herne; the music (the instruments being principally cornets and violins) was composed and directed by Alphonso Ferrabosco the younger,—a musician of considerable celebrity at this period, of whose works we know scarcely anything. Ben, however, has taken care his fame should not speedily decay, for in one of his epigrams he mentions him in these terms :—

“ To urge, my loved Alphonso, that bold fame  
Of building towns, and making wild beasts tame,  
Which music had, or speak her own effects,  
That she removeth cares, sadness ejects,  
Declineth anger, persuades clemency,  
Doth sweeten mirth, and heighten piety,  
And is to a body, often ill inclined,  
No less a sovereign cure than to the mind ;  
T' allege, that greatest men were not ashamed,  
Of old, even by her practice to be famed ;  
To say indeed she were the soul of heaven,  
That the eighth sphere, no less than planets seven,  
Moved by her order, and the ninth more high,  
Including all, were thence called harmony :

I yet had uttered nothing on thy part,  
When these were but the praises of the art:  
But when I have said, the proofs of all these be  
Shed in thy songs, 'tis true—but short of thee."

Vocal music was, from the reign of Queen Elizabeth to this period, very extensively cultivated. Compositions written for the service of the church exhibited a high degree of merit, especially those of Dr. John Bull; whilst, in secular productions, such as madrigals and other "part-songs," as they were then styled, the age can boast of the genius of Wilbye, Weelkes, Cobbold, and Dowland, of whom the latter has had the advantage of being immortalised by the pen of Shakspeare. But in masques only can we trace any example of operatic music, and must advance to the year 1633 before we meet another effort worthy of being mentioned; such is Milton's splendid masque of "Comus," the music of which was produced by Henry Lawes. This skilful musician may boast of the honour of having had his

flourished.

sonnets, as

" Harry, wh  
and Waller,  
music, address

" Let those  
And garg  
Content tl  
Let words

The third line  
Italian names o  
fashion. The n  
we are enabled to  
served of the n  
Recitativo," as Be

Garden Theatre in 1785, and delighted her audience by her style of singing Arne's music to some of its songs. But one of the greatest English operatic musicians of the seventeenth century was Matthew Locke, whose music to the lyric portion of Shakspeare's "Macbeth," after the lapse of nearly two hundred years since it was composed, excites the admiration of every genuine connoisseur. During the protectorate, the Puritans closed the theatre; but although plays were prohibited as the inventions of Satan, yet it was evident the sturdy Roundheads were not insensible to the charms of dramatic music; for Sir William D'Avenant, in 1656, obtained a license to open Rutland House, in Charter-house Square, for the performance of operas under the title of "Entertainments in declamation and music, after the manner of the ancients." Undoubtedly many genuine plays were smuggled into representation under this title; but to much music, equally genuine, it also afforded an introduction, par-

D'Avenant's  
brought out so

From these  
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Although this  
buted very large  
for the theatre  
tant. He had  
famous masters  
works were the  
known in Engla  
to his twelve son  
for the organ or h  
faithfully endeave  
most famed Italia  
the seriousness

His introduction to the stage was of rather a singular character. It appears that a dancing-master of considerable repute, Josiah Priest, who invented dances for the theatre, got Tate to write a little dramatic piece called "Dido and *Æ*neas," to be played by his pupils; and then asked Purcell, who had scarcely reached his nineteenth year, to supply the music to it. This was done, and with such effect that the audience by whom it was heard were astonished at the genius it exhibited. It was talked of—the managers of one of the principal theatres came to hear it, and the result was the composer's speedy employment at the playhouse. In the course of his brilliant career, Purcell composed the music to Nathaniel Lee's "Theodosius, or the Force of Love"—to Dryden's "King Arthur"—to Betterton's alteration of Beaumont and Fletcher's "Diocletian, or the Prophetess"—to the "Fairy Queen," altered from Shakspeare's "Midsummer Night's Dream"—to "Timon of Athens," "the Libertine,"



Queen" and " the  
Crowne ; " the C  
" the Double De  
in the tragedies  
by Elkanah Sett  
tied," " Ahdelazo  
from the pen of  
" Bonduca" of B  
last is distinguishe  
popular " Britons  
quartette, " To ar

The production  
ingly numerous, t  
and are equally v  
sacred music stand  
and " Jubilate;" hi

there are admirers of his genius, who believe with Dryden, that

“ Sometimes a hero in an age appears,  
But scarce a Purcell in a thousand years.”

The same celebrated poet, in his ode on the death of Purcell, set to music with equal felicity by Dr. Blow, says—

“ The heavenly choir, who heard his notes from high,  
Let down the scale of music from the sky ;  
They handed him along ;  
And all the way he taught, and all the way they sung.”

Some idea of him may also be drawn from the following humorous rebus in Latin metre, composed on his name, by a person of the name of Tomlinson.

“ Galli marita, par tritico seges,  
Prænomen est ejus, dat chromati leges ;  
Intrat cognomen blanditiis Cati,  
Exit eremi in ædibus stati,  
Expertum effectum omnes admirantur.  
Quid merent Poetæ ?—ut bene calcentur.”

The translation of it here given, an indifferent one by the way, was set to music as a catch by Lenton.

"A mate to a cock, and corn tall as wheat,  
Is his christian name who in musick's compleat ;  
His surname begins with the grace of a cat,  
And concludes with the house of a hermit; note that.  
His skill and performance each auditor wins,  
But the poet deserves a good kick on his shins."

Purcell's productions show the great progress that had been made in England in operatic music since the commencement of the century; but the study of the musical art, in all its principal branches, had also been making important advances. That period boasts of the works of Gibbons, Blow, and of many other English composers of less note. Instrumental music was also much cultivated. The virginals gave place to the organ and harpsichord, for which excellent works were written by the musicians we have named.

The lute was now supplanted by the viol; but a composer, who liked not the latter instrument, set the following ridiculous description of it as a *round*.

“ Of all the instruments that are,  
None with the viol can compare;  
Mark how the strings their order keep,  
With a whet, whet, whet, and a sweep, sweep, sweep;  
But above all, this abounds  
With a zingle, zingle, zing, and a zit, zan, zounds.”

The viol and the harpsichord were the favourite instruments of the polished gentleman and lady of that period, and many individuals among the higher classes of society distinguished themselves by their proficiency upon them. Part-singing, too, was an equally fashionable accomplishment, and was heard in madrigals, rounds, catches, and every species of harmony for two or more voices, then practised. The principal public singers were Mr. James Bowen, Mr. Harris, Mr. Freeman, Mr. Pate, Mr.

Damascene, Mr. Woodson, Mr. Turner, and Mr. Bouchier; Mrs. Mary Davis, Miss Shore, (afterwards Mrs. Cibber,) Mrs. Cross, Miss Champion, and Mrs. Ann Bracegirdle. Foreign singers, however, began now to make their appearance, and were generally heard between the acts of some popular play. They also gave concerts, and in a short period became so fashionable, that, as has been stated in the **Introduction to the first volume, an attempt was made by their patronesses, at the commencement of the eighteenth century, to establish an Italian Opera.** “The Italian manner” quickly became the model of all the English operatic composers, till the appearance of Gay’s admirable burlesque of it in 1728, “*The Beggars’ Opera*,” the beautiful music of which was selected and arranged by Dr. Pepusch, a composer of considerable talent; evidences of which he has left us also in his masques of “*Venus and Adonis*,” and the “*Death of Dido*,” in his cantatas, and in his “*Treatise on Harmony*.”

“The Beggars’ Opera,” which was brought out at Rich’s theatre in Lincoln-inn Fields, met with the most decided success: it ran sixty consecutive nights, and continued to be repeated with increased gratification. In 1777, Linley enriched its instrumentation with considerable skill, particularly in the employment of the oboe, French horns, and clarionets. The same year brought forward a pupil of Dr. Arne as Captain Macheath, who afterwards became the wife of Dr. Kennedy, and was one of the most celebrated singers of her time. On this occasion she acquitted herself very creditably, and played the highwayman with effect equal to that created by her feminine successors in the same character. Mrs. Billington has been unrivalled in her personation of Polly, which she performed in 1790. In 1797, this favourite entertainment was repeated with Incledon as Captain Mac-heath, who sang exquisitely with Madame Mara as Polly, in the music of which she was only excelled by Mrs. Billington, and Mrs.

Martyr as Lucy—a pleasing second-rate singer. Mrs. Crouch, Miss Bolton, and Mrs. Mountain, also appeared with great success in this opera. Miss Stephens appeared as Polly, in 1813, with less effect as an actress, though certainly she acquitted herself admirably as a singer. We have had Pollys out of number since, but they will not detain us. Of the innumerable Mac-heaths, there has not been one with a voice equal to that of Incledon. Bellamy at one time played the part with credit, and Mr. W. Harrison is the only singer we have heard who acts up to the character, and is a singer worthy of the music.

In Dr. Arne we meet with a composer capable of disputing the claims to popularity of the foreign musicians of his time. Himself, his sister, and his brother, possessed considerable dramatic talent ; and in the Doctor's earliest operatic production, Addison's "Rosamond," first performed, March 7th, 1733, at Lincoln's-Inn fields, the cast embraced these

relatives. It runs thus :—the King, Mr. Barber; Sir Trusty, Mr. Leveridge; Page, *Master Arne*; Messenger, Mr. Corfe; Queen, Mrs. Jones; Grideline, Miss Chambers; and Rosamond, *Miss Arne*. The latter ultimately became Mrs. Cibber, and was long known as a sweet and accomplished singer. Dr. Arne married Miss Cecilia Young, (a pupil of Geniniani,) a vocalist of equal celebrity. After "Rosamond," he brought out a burletta on the subject of "Tom Thumb"—produced music to Milton's "Comus"—and to two other masques, "Britannia," and the "Judgment of Paris;" composed two oratorios—"Abel" and "Judith;" wrote music to an afterpiece, "Thomas and Sally," and an opera, "Eliza;" and then produced his immortal "Artaxerxes." His other productions are, the music to the "Masque of Alfred"—to the opera of the "Fairies"—to the tragedies of "Elfrida" and "Caractacus"—his additions to Purcell in "King Arthur" — his Shakspeare songs—his music to the Stratford Jubilee, and to the entertainment

sichord. He died of  
and was buried in  
Covent Garden.

“Artaxerxes,” which  
1762, is the most regular  
Italian model, produced  
performance of Ben Jonson.  
There is, however, a  
in the two,—the musical  
composition of an  
masque, of an Italian  
cannot be denied, though  
there is much to wish  
It possesses many parts  
the foreign production  
enamoured; he not only  
as Italian as he could  
with the exception of

brought on him the following castigation from the author of the "Rosciad."

"Let Tommy Arne, with usual pomp of style,  
Whose chief, whose only merit's to compile,  
Who, meanly pilfering here and there a bit,  
Deals music out, as Murphy deals out wit ;  
Publish proposals, laws for taste prescribe,  
And chant the praise of an Italian tribe ;  
Let him reverse kind Nature's just decrees,  
And teach e'en Brent a method not to please ;  
But never shall a truly British age  
Bear a vile race of eunuchs on the stage :  
The boasted works called national in vain,  
If one Italian voice pollutes the strain.  
Where tyrants rule, and slaves with joy obey,  
Let slavish minstrels pour th' enervate lay ;  
To Britons far more noble pleasures bring,  
In native notes, while Beard and Vincent sing."

The individuals mentioned by this severe satirist were the principal English vocalists of the period. There were also Miss Rafter, afterwards the celebrated Mrs. Clive; Lowe,

the favourite male singer of Drury Lane, as Beard was of Covent Garden. Both had remarkably fine tenor voices, but Beard was much the best musician. Mrs. Barbier, whose talents found a chronicler in Addison, and Miss Turner, a delightful vocalist, the chief attraction at the concerts then held at the Swan and Castle; besides others we have named elsewhere.

Miss Brent produced great effect in Mandane; but in a few years she had rivals capable of disputing the palm with her as a native singer. The principal of these was Miss Cecilia Davis, distinguished in Italy, where her singing was much admired, by the title of *L'Inglesina*. This lady, however, was not satisfied with being considered the greatest singer her country had produced; she entered into a contest with the most fashionable Italian vocalists; and in the opinion of the best judges, Gabrielli, the Malibran of her time, found it difficult to prove a superiority over her. Ce-

cilia Davis was excelled by no English singer till the appearance of Mrs. Billington, who performed Mandane for the first time on the 13th of April 1787; and repeated the same character, with an effect even more brilliant, when she returned from Italy in 1804. Mandane has since been personated by all the principal female vocalists who have adorned the English stage; among whom the most worthy of notice are, Miss Bolton, Mrs. Mountain, Miss Paton, Mrs. Dickons, Miss Stephens, Madame Mara, Mrs. Crouch, and Miss Wilson, afterwards Mrs. Welsh.

The success of the "Beggars' Opera" occasioned many imitations. In 1731 appeared the "Village Opera," which in its turn shortly after gave rise to the still popular opera, "Love in a Village." The first Madge was Miss Davies, afterwards the wife of the celebrated composer, Jonathan Battishill. Rosetta never had so able a representative as Mrs. Billington, who made her *début* at Covent Garden Theatre, in that

character, on the 13th of February 1786, and by her performance established her reputation as an operatic singer; and though followed by a brilliant host of vocalists, she has not, in the opinion of the oldest musicians, been excelled. Among these we must notice Miss Bolton, afterwards Lady Thurlow; Mrs. Dickons, Miss Lyon, afterwards Mrs. Bishop; Mrs. Mountain, Mrs. Crouch, and Miss Stephens. Madge has found her most celebrated representatives in Mrs. Bland and Mrs. Liston.

Contemporary with Dr. Arne, during a part of his career, was Dr. Arnold, whose first effort as an operatic composer was produced in 1763 at Covent Garden Theatre, in his twenty-third year. This was the "Maid of the Mill," partly a compilation, but containing many evidences of unusual musical ability. Arnold has himself stated, that so anxious was he to possess an opportunity of getting his talents before the public eye, that he accepted the small sum of twelve pounds for producing this opera.

He afterwards composed several oratorios—the “Cure of Saul,” in 1767—“Abimelech,” the following year—“the Prodigal Son in” 1773—and the “Resurrection” in 1777. During the same period he was busily engaged in several dramatic performances, induced by his purchase of Marylebone Gardens, in which they were represented. Two of these, the “Revenge,” and the “Woman of Spirit,” were written by the unfortunate Chatterton, and they were performed by Mr. Reinhold, for many years a celebrated singer; Mr. Charles Bannister, the father of John Bannister, Master Cheney, and Mrs. Thompson.

The best productions of this composer are, however, to be met with in the “Castle of Andalusia: George Colman’s “Inkle and Yarico,” first performed August 4th, 1787; the “Battle of Hexham,” the “Children in the Wood,” and the “Cambro-Britons,” in which he introduced his music. He wrote several sets of songs, both for Vauxhall and for Marylebone Gardens, of

which the best are, “Come live with me, and be my love,” and “Ye Shepherds, so cheerful and gay;” that used to be finely sung at Vauxhall by Vernon, a favourite tenor singer there. He also re-composed Addison’s “Rosamond;” but his talents were not of a nature capable of a successful rivalry with those of his more celebrated predecessor in that opera—and brought forth another oratorio, “Elijah, or the Woman of Shunam,” which was one of the best of his attempts in this species of composition. He died on the 22nd of October 1802, and was buried in Westminster Abbey.

Dr. Boyce was another celebrated dramatic composer of the last century. His first effort for the stage was his music to Lord Lansdowne’s masque, “Peleus and Thetis,” which evinced talent of no common order. He was a pupil of Dr. Pepusch, and under his superintendence had studied the works of Palestrina, Orlando de Lasso, Stradella, Carissimi, Tallis, Bird, Purcell, and Orlando Gibbons; but as well as

possessing a mind stored with such learning, Dr. Boyce was a musician of considerable invention. The very graceful melody set by him to Lord Chesterfield's song, "When Fanny, blooming Fair," which may almost be said to have been his maiden composition, is a pleasing example of his originality. Strange to say, the "Masque" was composed by him when he, from some malady with which he had been afflicted, was incurably deaf; notwithstanding which, when it was performed by the Philharmonic society, it excited universal delight.

In 1750, he produced the music of two after-pieces, "The Chaplet," and "The Shepherd's Lottery," which were brought out successfully at Drury Lane Theatre. He wrote also a dirge for the procession in "Romeo and Juliet," a similar production for "Cymbeline," and the music of the songs in the "Winter's Tale." In sacred music, his genius was not less conspicuous.

His performances on the organ were of such

a nature, as to get him selected to be the successor of Mr. Joseph Kelway, organist of St. Michael, Cornhill, in 1736 ; and his general ability as a musician led, in the same year, to his appointment as one of the composers to the king. In the service of the church his learning had fine scope, and the advantage to which he employed it may most satisfactorily be ascertained from his splendid serenata of "Solomon," produced by him in 1747. He also composed anthems, odes, and other productions of a religious character, and several concerted pieces for instruments—particularly twelve sonatas for two violins and a bass, and eight symphonies for violins and other instruments. He died on the 7th of February, 1779, in his sixty-ninth year, having been born in 1710, and was buried in the crypt of St. Paul's cathedral.

Jonathan Battishill, at an early age, wrote melodies that were sung at Sadler's Wells, then of some repute as a place of entertainment, of which his fine hunting song, introduced by a re-

citative, "The Whistling Ploughman hails the Blushing Morn," followed by the spirited air, "Away to the Copse, to the Copse lead away," was long an established favourite. He afterwards became the conductor of the band in Covent Garden Theatre, where he presided at the orchestra. In 1764, in conjunction with Mr. Michael Arne, he produced the music of a serious opera, called "Almena," in which he displayed considerable dramatic ability; but in consequence of the uninteresting character of the *libretto*, now a common fault in such performances, the piece did not succeed. He next produced the music of an entertainment called "The Rites of Hecate," in which his talents were better appreciated; but Battishill is best known by his collection of songs, his catches and glees, many of which were very popular, and deserve the student's attention. His song, "Kate of Aberdeen," was deservedly a favourite; and his prize glee, written for the Nobleman's Catch Club, "Come, bind my brows, ye

Wood-nymphs fair," which obtained him a gold medal, in 1771, is another admirable example of his genius. He was an excellent organist, and played the masterpieces of Handel, Corelli, Arne, and Boyce, in a style unexcelled by any contemporary; and, in conjunction with an actor of the name of Lee, and Mr. Joseph Baildon, was the projector of the dramatic performances held at the Crown and Anchor Tavern. **He died on the 10th of December, 1801, at the age of sixty-three, and was buried, by his particular desire, in St. Paul's, near the remains of Dr. Boyce.**

It may be gathered, from what has been stated in the preceding pages, that musical talent in England had made great advances since the commencement of the eighteenth century. The Italian masters had not been studied in vain, and the same result which followed a knowledge of their excellence, waited upon a familiarity with the superior ability of Italian performers. Great improvements had taken

place in the English orchestra, which, assisted by native singers, in a few years made the performance of an English opera rival the perfection of its foreign rival.

Among the composers who did honour to this period we must notice Dr. Busby, who wrote the music to Holcroft's "Tale of Mystery," Monk Lewis's "Rugantino," Miss Porter's "Fair Fugatives," and Mr. Cumberland's "Joanna;" Dr. Crotch, principally known as the composer of the oratorio, "Palestine." In glees and other vocal pieces, the same age may boast of the genius of the Earl of Mornington, Dr. William Hayes, William Jackson of Exeter, Samuel Webbe, Dr. Harrington of Bath, Dr. Calcott, Stafford Smith, Sir John Stevenson, Dr. Cooke, and Mr. Stevens. The principal singers about the same period were Vernon and Harrison, Michael Kelly, Incledon and Brabam, as tenors; Champness, Reinhold, Bartleman, John Bannister, Sedgwick, and Dignum, as the basses; while the principal

female singers were Miss Linley, (afterwards Mrs. Sheridan,) Mrs. Billington, Mrs. Baddely, Miss Phillips, (afterwards Mrs Crouch,) Mrs. Jordan, Miss Romanzino, (afterwards Mrs. Bland,) Miss Mountain, Miss Poole, (afterwards Mrs. Dickons,) Miss Abrams, and Miss Wilson, (afterwards Mrs. Welsh.)

With such assistance it may be imagined that the English opera, towards the close of the last century, obtained a footing as an entertainment which made it capable of rivalling in attraction any dramatic performance native or foreign.

The composers who availed themselves of such advantages are neither few nor undistinguished. We now proceed to notice the most celebrated of them. Of these, Linley was one of the most popular. In 1776 he produced at Drury Lane the music to a new two-act piece from the French, called "Zelima and Azor." Garrick had sold his share in that theatre to him, Sheridan, who afterwards married his daughter, and Dr. Ford,

for thirty-seven thousand pounds ; and this his first production during his co-management was remarkably successful. His son, a very fine player on the violin, then led the band. In 1778 he wrote the music for a very successful piece of Sheridan's, the "Camp," in which was introduced some beautiful scenery by J. P. Loutherburg. Bannister was the Serjeant Drill of the play, and made it one of his most amusing personations. This was followed, in 1784, by his music in the "Spanish Rivals," first played at Drury Lane on the 5th of November. In 1785 his talents were as successfully developed in Mr. Cobb's three-act comic opera, "The Strangers at Home," which possessed the advantage of Mrs. Jordan's clever acting, and unpretending yet delightful singing. In other operas Linley was equally successful. He composed a vast quantity of the popular music of the time, which, with little pretension to science, was always agreeable to the ear. He died on the 19th of November 1795. As a



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**Mrs. Brooks**, the authoress of “*Rosina*.” “*The Woodman*,” a still more favourite production, was brought out at the same theatre on the 26th of February 1791. Incledon, Bannister, and **Miss Poole**, gave Shield’s beautiful songs with admirable effect. We do not find him exercising his genius again for the stage till 1794, when, on February 22nd, he composed and compiled the musical portion of the “*Travellers in Switzerland*,” written by the Rev. H. Dudley; and on the 22nd of the following April assisted in producing the music of Pearce’s comic opera, “*Netley Abbey*.”

On the 10th of November 1795, he assisted O’Keefe in a musical afterpiece, entitled “*The Irish Mimic, or Blunders at Brighton*;” and on the 6th of the following February had completed the music for Prince Hoare’s popular opera, “*Lock and Key*.” On the 25th of April 1797, he had laboured to the same purpose for another production by the same writer, entitled the “*Italian*

Villagers ;" and the same year he also furnished music for the " Wicklow Gold Mines." He contributed to several other dramatic pieces, particularly, in the year 1807, to the opera of " Two Faces under a Hood ;" and, in almost everything he attempted, produced evidence of taste, expression, and originality. He died on the 26th of January 1829, aged eighty-two years, and was buried in the cloisters of Westminster Abbey. Shield was certainly fortunate in possessing such singers as Billington, Miss Poole, Incledon, Johnstone, Bannister, and Edwin ; but they had as much reason to be gratified in meeting with such a composer.

Some doubts exist as to Michael Kelly's right to a considerable portion of the music that bears his name. It was well known that his knowledge of harmony was exceedingly limited ; but whatever may have been his deficiencies as a musician, he managed to conceal them so well as to be appointed director of the music and

composer to Drury Lane, and afterwards director of the music to the Italian Opera ; and besides performing as the principal singer at each of these theatres, there are nearly sixty different operatic productions to which he attached his name. Mazzanto, a veteran Italian, is said to have afforded him important assistance in his musical works, but he shares that honour with one or two others. He was first the pupil of Rauzzini in singing, and when he was sixteen left Ireland, where he was born in 1762, for Naples, where he obtained the patronage of the British minister Sir William Hamilton, and the tuition of a much greater man, Aprili. By the influence of the latter he procured an engagement at Leghorn ; and, after singing with success at several of the Italian theatres, proceeded to Germany, where he had the good fortune, at Vienna, to be one of the original singers in Mozart's " Nozze di Figaro." He made his first appearance in London, at Drury Lane Theatre, in the opera of " Lionel and Clarissa," and was a po-

pular singer and composer for many years afterwards. His most successful efforts as a musician were produced in the once popular "Bluebeard," first performed at the same theatre on the 16th of January 1798, in which he was a principal singer, and was assisted by Barrymore, Suett, Bannister, Mrs. Bland, Miss Decamp, (afterwards Mrs. Charles Kemble,) and Mrs. Crouch. "Pizarro," first produced at Drury Lane on the 24th of May 1799, owed also some obligations to him; and the music of the "Peasant Boy," which is also called his, first represented at the Lyceum on the 1st of January 1811, obtained equal favour. His death occurred at Ramsgate on the 15th of October 1816.

We cannot claim Storace as an English composer, though he undoubtedly laboured extensively in the production of English operas; and the same reason prevents our placing his sister, Signora Storace, among our vocalists, although she was for a long period one of the chief at-

tractions of the English stage. We therefore pass on to such as we have an undoubted right to. M. P. King wrote the music of several dramas, particularly of Mr. Kenney's "False Alarms, or the Blue Stocking," produced on the 3rd of January, 1811, at Drury Lane; of Thomas Moore's "M.P., or the Blue Stocking," represented at the Lyceum on the 9th of September, 1811; and "Up all Night, or the Smuggler's Cave,"—an entertainment that proceeded from the latter theatre, after it had been re-built, on the 15th of June 1816. He also distinguished himself as a pleasing glee-writer. His "When shall we three meet again?" deservedly remains a favourite. The late Lord Dudley and Ward behaved towards him with extraordinary liberality, advancing him at different times money to the amount of 10,000*l.*; notwithstanding which, when he died, he left his family in straitened circumstances; so much so, that, about eight or ten years since, they emigrated to North America, where the widow and

daughters opened a school, and the sons taught music.

Other operatic productions were heard from the stage about the same time, that possessed the music of Mazzinghi, Reeve, Attwood, and Davy. The first two of these gentlemen were the Beaumont and Fletcher of the opera; and the earliest example of their combined talents was Cobb's "Ramah Droogh, or Wine does Wonders," a comic opera that went off successfully on the 12th of November 1798. With still greater effect the same union continued in Cobb's popular "Paul and Virginia," that came out on the 1st of May 1800; and again in Prince Hoare's "Chains of the Heart, or the Slave by Choice," first performed on the 9th of December of the following year. "Paul and Virginia" came recommended by the delightful singing of Incledon and Mrs. H. Johnston; and the "Chains of the Heart" possessed no less attraction in the first appearance at Covent Garden of Braham and Storace. This interesting partnership dissolved a few years

afterwards; and of their individual efforts, Reeves composed the music to Reynolds' "Out of Place, or the Lake of Lausanne," produced on the 3rd of March; and Mazzinghi furnished similar materials for the same author's more popular opera, "The Exile," brought out at the King's Theatre, by the Covent Garden company, on the 10th of November 1808. Attwood is mostly known as an operatic composer, with Mr. Moorhead, of the music of "Il Bondicani," an opera represented for the first time, on the 15th of November 1800, at Covent Garden Theatre; and Davy was also associated with Moorhead in the production of the music of "La Perouse, or the Desolate Isle,"—a pantomimic drama that came out on the 28th of February of the following year, and met with most decided success.

Braham has obtained a celebrity which has not been surpassed by any performer on the English stage, the boards of which he first trod at Covent Garden in the character of

“Shepherd Joe” in “Poor Vulcan,” for the benefit of his master, Leoni. This was in 1787, fifty-three years since, and he is still a singer! For a long time his success was anything but certain. His encores were feeble, and he rarely repeated a song without considerable disapprobation; but Signora Storace, who was usually on the stage with him, had a manner of eyeing the refractory part of the audience, when she led him forth to comply with the dubious encore that used to silence every effort at opposition; and we believe the encouragement this fashionable singer afforded him was the foundation of his successful career.

His great effort as a composer will be found in Dibdin’s popular comic opera, “The English Fleet in 1342.” He had previously appeared to advantage as a composer in Dibdin’s comic opera “The Cabinet,” which came out on the 19th of February 1802, in the music of which he was assisted by Rauzzini, Davy, Reeve, Corri, and Moorhead. But “The Eng-

lish Fleet" was solely his own. It was first produced at Covent Garden, the 13th of December 1803, with an unprecedented success; and as a proof that musical talent was increasing in value, we compare the prices received by their several composers for the four most popular operas produced during the term of fifty years. For "Artaxerxes" Dr. Arne, in 1763, obtained sixty guineas; for "Rosina," in 1781, Mr. Shield was satisfied with forty pounds; for "the Siege of Belgrade," Storace pocketed, in 1791, just one thousand pounds; and for "the English Fleet," in 1804, Braham, more fortunate still, received one thousand guineas.

He assisted in composing other operas after this, but with very different results. Since then he has continued a singer, as regards sacred music, the most effective this country has produced. We remember him at the last grand musical festival held in Westminster Abbey, when he created an impression that the Italian vocalists there engaged never approached. After making,

by his exertions during his long career, a fortune such as foreigners alone had hitherto obtained in this country, he was so ill advised as to embark in two speculations—the St. James's Theatre and the Colosseum—by which, we are afraid, he has lost nearly the whole of it.

Horn and Parry have also put forth some pretensions as operatic composers; but they aim at nothing beyond the talent of forming pretty melodies, similar to those that may be found supporting the reputation of such men as Lee, Wade, Nelson, Rodwell, T. Cooke, and others of about the same musical calibre, whose ballads have formed the staple in most request at the music-sellers for the last ten years. The works of Henry Bishop are of a much higher order of merit. They exhibit the resources of the musician—taste, learning, invention, and judgment, to an extent that has rarely been excelled by any of his countrymen. As a boy, he was distinguished by his love of the art of which he was ultimately to become

an ornament; and his proficiency on more than one instrument, and facility in composition, early attracted the notice of friends who knew to what advantage they might be applied. In a great measure, he may be said to have been self-taught;—the tuition of Bianchi, his first master, amounted to nothing very important; he may possibly have profited by the lessons of Anfossi, with whom he associated when a youth: but, although instruction he did receive from more than one musician, his great natural talent quickly forced him beyond the limits of their guidance. The manager of one of the patent theatres became acquainted with his ability, and in a very short time afterwards M. P. King, who was then the first English opera composer, was thrown completely into the shade by Bishop's superior genius. He was appointed director of the music, and composer to Covent Garden—and afterward filled the same office at Drury Lane.

One of his earliest efforts in the musical drama was in a four-act opera, called "Kais, or Love in the Deserts," produced at Drury Lane Theatre on the 11th of February 1809, in which Storace and Braham played the principal characters. It was very favourably received, and followed, on the 23rd of the same month, by his "Circassian Bride," distinguished by the performance of Miss Lyon, afterwards Mrs. Bishop. The night afterwards this theatre was burned to the ground—a fate that had fallen upon Covent Garden not six months before. In this disastrous conflagration, the composer lost the score and the whole of the music of his opera. A singular circumstance happened in connexion with these fires. Huntingdon, an evangelical coal-heaver, held forth in his conventicle in a furious strain of congratulation at the destruction of both our great theatres, which he styled the devil's houses, and affirmed that their being burned down was a manifest

judgment. The following week a fire broke out in the next house to his chapel, which so completely shared the fate of the theatres as to leave scarcely a wall standing.

The Drury Lane company then acted at the Lyceum, where Mr. Bishop laboured in his vocation for Arnold's opera, "The Maniac, or the Swiss Banditti," first performed on the 15th of March 1810. Here his ability as a musician was also clearly developed, but not with such effect as resulted from his labours upon Pocock's popular melo-drama, "The Miller and his Men," brought out in the winter of 1813. On the 1st of the following February, the Covent Garden management put forth a new comic opera, entitled "The Farmer's Wife," written by Charles Dibdin, and composed by Bishop, Reeve, Condell, T. Welsh, Davy, and Addison. It had a favourable reception, and Bishop's share of the music was generally admired. Sinclair and Miss Stephens gave it

the advantage of their "most sweet voices;" and on the same day in the same month of the following year, at the same theatre, associated with Reeve, he produced the music of another new comic opera, called "Brother and Sister," wherein Duruset met with a favourable reception.

Bishop, indefatigable in his exertions, completed, on the 17th of January 1815, his **pleasing additions to Shakspeare's "Midsummer Night's Dream;"** and by the 12th of March, in conjunction with Whittaker, was ready with the music of "Guy Mannering." His labours on each do him infinite credit. By the 12th of November 1816, he produced his charming music to Morton's opera, "The Slave," also at Covent Garden; and on the 11th of December 1819, for the same theatre, displayed his genius, with equal success, in illustrating Shakspeare's "Comedy of Errors." Our immortal dramatist was evidently the favourite study of Mr. Bishop, for, in addition to the tasks we have

already named, on the 18th of November 1820, he produced his delightful embellishments to the "Twelfth Night," in which the "Viola" of Miss M. Tree was a performance that well deserved the reputation it procured her. We find him, by the 18th of March 1821, engaged in arranging and composing music for the old comedy of "The Chances," cooked up by Reynolds at Covent Garden as a sort of opera; and, on the 14th of February 1822, performing a similar labour for an entertainment called "Montrose, or the Children of the Mist." Planche's "Maid Marian," produced on the 30th of the following November, afforded his genius much greater scope, and, as a natural result, his music is admirable throughout. Bishop was now revelling in the full strength of his resources, far excelling any of his English contemporaries, and affording proofs of talent that foreign musicians must have respected.

On the 8th of May he delighted the fre-

quenter of Covent Garden with a fresh display of his musical powers, in the still popular opera of "Clari, or the Maid of Milan," wherein Miss M. Tree's performance was again a source of extraordinary gratification. "The Fall of Algiers" was represented on the 19th of January 1825, at Drury Lane, with less effect: notwithstanding which, the music is clever. Sapiro and Miss Stephens were the principal singers; but though their vocal efforts won them approbation, their acting was never very effective. At the same theatre, on the 27th of January 1827, there was heard for the first time Mr. Bishop's opera "Englishmen in India"—comprising many very superior productions; since when he has gone on in his career, putting forth occasionally some work, such as "Aladdin," to remind his admirers that he still possesses the imagination and judgment that charmed them in earlier years, but more frequently labouring upon indifferent dramas, which no musician could render popular; or in arranging

for the English stage some of the best works of foreign composers, wherein he had no opportunity of giving evidence of his originality. Fortunately, of this no further evidence can be required: for no English musician has contributed to the theatre such a mass of excellent dramatic music. His songs, duets, glees, and other concerted vocal pieces, distinguished by their originality, are much too numerous to be here named individually; and their merit is so well appreciated, that such a catalogue is unnecessary.

Bishop has undoubtedly raised himself to the rank of a musical classic; and the finished efforts of his best days are such as the most gifted musician might have been proud to acknowledge. In none of the dramas for which his music was composed, has he had that scope for display which the libretto of the Italian, French, and German opera usually allows; we therefore cannot fairly compare him with any of the great masters who have distin-

guished themselves in those schools, but it is no less true, that within the limits to which he has been confined, he has exhibited the legitimate resources of his art with an effect that many of the most fashionable Italian composers, with all their advantages, have never produced.

Since the commencement of the present century the study of music in England has advanced, in all its departments, to an extent never previously known in this country. On the stage, besides the works of native composers, we have had, in an English form, the masterpieces of foreign music, till we may almost say, that Mozart, Beethoven, Weber, Rossini, Bellini, and Auber, have become naturalized here. Of these arrangements, we must distinguish the "Fidelio" of Beethoven, and the "Somnambulist" of Bellini, as possessing the two most important personations with which Malibran enriched the English stage. A familiarity with such productions has had important effects. The musical student has taken

them as models, and, as many a recent opera proves, with no inconsiderable advantage.

John Barnett has imbibed his ideas of his art from the German school. His first master was Bochsa, who was at this period musical director and composer of the King's Theatre, and in more than one ballet of the great harpist there brought out, some of the most favourite passages were produced by Master Barnett. The latter, however, found that lessons came so few and far between, that he provided himself with another master. He turned his attention to the works of Spohr, Beethoven, and Weber, and traces of his attentive study of them may be found in each of his operas. After considerable experience in dramatic composition for unsuccessful dramas, varied by attempts of less pretension made when appointed composer to Madame Vestris's theatre, the Olympic, he produced his first and best work, "The Mountain Sylph," at the Lyceum. Popular as it has been, we regard it rather as an example

of clever scholarship than genius. It is possessed of several striking passages, and ingenious in many of its concerted pieces, but as an opera it wants relief. "Fair Rosamond" and "Farnelli," his more recent productions, possess the same faults. The learning of the composer is somewhat too ostentatiously displayed, and often so as to injure his claim to originality; yet with it are introduced to us such beautiful phrases and ingenious harmonies, as are sure to excite the admiration of the critic. Barnett has composed several songs that have enjoyed considerable popularity. Besides the music published with his name, he is also the composer of a series of songs and duets, to which the name of Devereux is attached, that were brought out a few years since.

Balfe has studied in the Italian school, and is much too fond of repeating his lessons. Paesiello and Cimarosa would have been far better guides to him than the imitators of Rossini, to whose second-hand resources he appears

so attached. In fact, we scarcely know whether we ought to place him here as an English musician, for if from the works he has produced every exotic grace were removed, we are fearful what remained would be too insignificant to deserve notice. As the composer, however, of the "Maid of Artois," in which Malibran's matchless performance has connected her name inseparably with the English stage, we cannot mention Mr. Balfe without our acknowledgments for the great gratification he enabled us to enjoy. We regard Falstaff (an opera he had the good fortune to get brought out at the Queen's Theatre) as the most favourable specimen of his ability as a musician. Lablache and his talented coadjutors made us fancy we were listening to a superior work of Donizetti's.

Superior to either of the composers we have just mentioned is Cooke, also, like Balfe, who was his pupil, an Irishman. He is superior, because he is infinitely more original. His

genius is not so invalidated as to require his frequently taking the benefit of the *Spohr*, like some of his contemporaries; or his clerkly accomplishments of such a character as to make it necessary for his mind to apply itself to book-keeping in "the Italian method," like others. Unfortunately for him, the libretto of each of his operas is as uninteresting as such a thing could be made, and consequently he has hitherto been exerting musical talents of the highest order under the greatest disadvantage. Notwithstanding this, it is impossible to look into his "Amilie," or his "Henrique," and not admire the extent of his resources. He possesses extraordinary ingenuity both in melody and harmony, without showing too conspicuously the mechanism of his art in either. He is expressive, dramatic, and often picturesque; and with a drama of a high character, on which we should be glad to see him engaged, there is no doubt he would produce such an opera as must be a lasting ornament to the English stage.

The dramatic efforts of Packer, Loder, and one or two other musicians of the present day, we look upon as promises rather than performances. It is the very foolish opinion of the majority of our composers, that the libretto of an opera is a subject of secondary consideration ; and the result is, that instead of a poetic drama, which ought to be their material for illustration, they obtain a foolish story, composed of improbable incidents and common-place characters, in a language that Grub-street would be ashamed of. We refer them to the masques of Ben Jonson, or the operas of Metastasio, to prove to them that better musicians than themselves were of a different way of thinking. A musical phrase should be the interpretation of a poetical idea, illustrated in some characteristic manner by the genius of the composer ; but without ideas in his author how is a musician to produce one in his score ? It usually happens that the latter relies upon situation ; but though this resource may enable him to produce im-

portant effects for a time, it is nonsensical to imagine that these merely artistical displays will long be effectual, unsupported by any genuine appeal to the intellect.

English music owes much to the different musical societies established in this country of late years, particularly the Philharmonic, the Societa Armonica, and the Society of British Musicians. The last was an admirable institution for the encouragement of native talent, and its performances did unquestionably develop talent of a high order in musical composition. We have a very agreeable remembrance of the works of Sterndale Bennet, Litolff, and other young composers, heard there with all the effect of the society's fine orchestra; and from this remembrance we anticipate for them a distinguished career in their profession. The voice also has been cultivated here with such success that we could afford to the Italian opera such singers as Mrs. Wood and Madame Albertazzi, and Mr. Boisragon, (Signor Bor-

rani;) while our own stage has been enriched with such vocalists as Miss Bellchambers, Miss Love, Miss Povey, Miss Inverarity, Miss Sheriff, Miss Lacy, Mrs. Waylett, Mrs. Fitzwilliam, Madame Vestris, Miss M. Tree, and Miss Fanny Ayton; Mr. Phillips, Mr. Leffler, Mr. Balfe, Mr. W. Harrison, Mr. Allen, Mr Barker, Mr. Wilson, Mr. Frazer, Mr. Collins, and Mr. Templeton.

In the orchestra we have been equally successful, having been able to boast of such performers as Mori, Watts, Lindley, Parke, Grattan Cooke, Willman, Nicholson, Parker, and a host of others almost equally celebrated on their several instruments. The quartette concerts, the chamber concerts, and the concerts à la Musard, were the most convincing evidence of the immense improvement that since the commencement of the century have taken place in the performance of instrumental music in England. In short, in every department of operatic music, great advances have been made; and it

requires only an English musician, with a mind capable of employing them properly, to place the English theatre on a footing of equality with its rivals.

Much of the improvement which has recently taken place in the musical drama of this country is due to the exertions of Malibran, who was not only an example for every Englishwoman who has since her performances appeared as a dramatic singer, but was in a great measure the instructor of her coadjutors, vocal and instrumental, in every opera in which she sang on the English stage. The orchestra sought as diligently to play up to her, as did her fellow singers. Her extraordinary displays stimulated the endeavours of every individual of the slightest talent with whom she was then engaged, and the result appeared in operatic entertainments superior to everything of the kind of native growth previously known. Her "Son-nambula," the first of these unrivalled personations, was a study for the musical artist;

the delicious singing, the finished acting, and the intimate sympathy for the beautiful and the intellectual which it developed, cannot but be fresh in the recollection of our readers. Amina became the type of grace and innocence, suffering from unjust suspicion, in situations of singular interest, and ultimately triumphing over it, as completely as it should always triumph. Bellini's melodies are peculiarly pleasing, but, heard with the advantage of Malibran's vocal ability, they appeared delicious. She awakened the English public to a conception of the highest intellectual enjoyment that could be derived from the musical drama, and afforded such lessons to their taste, as made it capable of appreciating the minutest excellence of musical science. No person of imagination ever witnessed her Amina without becoming a musician; and, by the same wonderful agency, the most vulgar mind was made sensible of intellectual impressions previously unknown to him. The true-hearted heroic Fidelio was the next

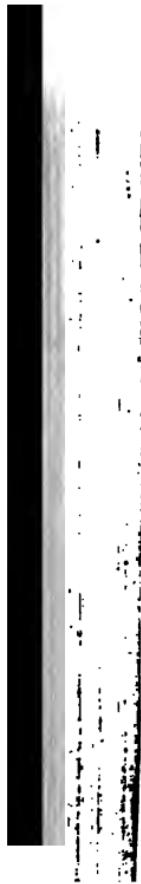
of her glorious creations. We had previously beheld Schröeder in this character, in which it may be said that the fair German was as thoroughly at home as it was possible for so clever a woman of her country to be in masterpieces of her country's musical science; but in Malibran there was a grace of which Schröeder was deficient. There can scarcely be a finer contrast than exists in the music of Bellini and Beethoven. The mind of Malibran could feel the influence and appreciate the excellence of both, and her impressions of the graceful Italian and the profound German she was enabled, by the exercise of her genius, to convey to her hearers. The thunders of applause and enthusiastic encores with which they rewarded its exercise, evinced the completeness with which they felt its influence.

Malibran's efforts in one or two other characters in which she appeared at Drury Lane for a few nights, and even those in Balfé's "Maid of Artois," are not to be compared with her pre-

vious performances on the English stage ; yet the same intellect, the same skill, and the same grace, presided over all. Of the latter her Isolina was the most effective, although she had neither the scope nor the materials for display in either, which the resources of Beethoven and Bellini had provided. The impression she made in those operas, no other singer could have produced. We must therefore think the more highly of her talent, that could create with the meretricious and the unpopular, dramatic effects that she alone excelled, when assisted by two of the greatest masters of the modern musical drama.



**ITALIAN  
SONNETS, ODES, &c.  
ADDRESSED TO  
MADAME MALIBRAN.**



## SONNETS, ODES, &c.

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### SONNET

*Inscribed to Madame Malibran, in 1830, at the close  
of her engagement at the Theatre Italien in Paris.*

O più di Euterpe, o almen tu Euterpe sei,  
Donna, che imperi col divino accento  
Sovra i moti del cor, e incanti e bei  
Chi da te pende ad ammirarti intento.

Perfin le aurette riverenti e il vento  
Al canto lieto ed ai dogliosi omei  
Sospendon l' ali, e van reggendo a stento  
L'armonia delle sfere i sommi Dei.

Oh d'Italia splendor, madre feconda  
Di Geni alteri, a cui piega la fronte  
Chi sta sull' arsa e la gelata sponda !

Freme al tuo piè l' Invidia, e il sacro monte  
Suona per te di laude vereconda,  
Secura ai colpi del rio Veglio e all' onte.

## ODE

*Written on the same occasion as the foregoing.*

Qual tumulto d'insoliti affetti  
 Agitando vien l' alma nel seno,  
 Che or ne turba il soave sereno,  
 Or la invita al sospira d' amor ?  
 Perchè a questi, che intorno mi stanno,  
 Scorgo in volto il diletto e l' affanno  
 Alternati alle scosse del cor ?

Chi produce si fulgidi effetti,  
 Chi signora è dell' alme cotanto,  
 Che a suo senno il sorriso, ed il pianto  
 Fa sul labbro, o sul ciglio spuntar ?  
 Ah ! sei tu, che col magico accento  
 Opri, o Donna, il sublime portento  
 Di far teco gioire e penar.

A diffonder lo spirto e la vita  
 Fura al sole scintilla possente  
 Quel mortal, cui natura languente

Dal torpore fu dato destar.  
 Tutto dorme . . . dal labbro ti scende  
 Una fiamma, che il core ne accende,  
 Lo fa in seno commosso balzar.

Col divino poter di sua cetra  
 Placò Stige di Tracia il Cantore ;  
 Temprò all' ombre l' eterno dolore,  
 Pluto stesso a suoi voti piegò.  
 Tu produci portento simile,  
 Donna illustre, in ogni alma gentile,  
 Cui sventura od amore piagò.

Che mai valsero ad Argo i cent' occhi  
 Alla possa del flauto febeo ?  
 Mal vegliare all' incanto poteo ;  
 All' impero del sonno cedè.  
 La più fiera d' affetti tempesta  
 Al poter di tua voce s' arresta,  
 Vinto è sempre ogni senso da te.

Di, qual nume t' invade furtivo  
 Quando schiudi l' armonico labbro ?  
 Forse allora t' ispira quel fabbro,  
 Che in te un' alma si bella temprò ?

Ma qual forza, qual genio, qual dio,  
Tal beltade, tal vezzo, tal brio,  
Sì a dovizia in te, Donna, versò ?

Il tuo merto è il mio sommo pensiero ;  
Mi sublima l' eccelso tuo volo,  
Svengo ai lagni di un tenero duolo,  
In te assorto la notte ed il dì.  
Che stupir, se a me stesso rapito,  
Vincitore il piacer dell' udito,  
A ragione i suoi dritti rapì,

In segno di sincera ammirazione

P. e. P.

## SONNET

*Addressed to Madame Malibran, on her departure  
from Naples to Bologna.*

O Donna, ne' cui labbri Iddio compose  
Di ogni bello la possa e la ventura,  
E tutta in te l' idea splendente e pura  
Dell' armonia dell' Universo espone :

Come la Terra, quando il Sol si asconde,  
Stanza è di tristi augei dolente e scura,  
Finchè non torni a ravvivar le cose  
Il ministro maggior della Natura ;

Tale nel tuo partir languente e grama  
Rimansi ogni alma, e parle il giorno estremo  
Il dì che il picciol Reno a se ti chiama ;

E nell' abbandonato egro soggiorno,  
Orbi per te di vita, attenderemo  
Quasi raggio di Sole il tuo ritorno.

D. B.

## STANZAS

*Improvised at a dinner given by the Commandant of  
Bologna in 1832.*

Talora al mio pensier questo i' dimando :  
 Se sia Femina o Uom la Malibran ;  
 Che s' io la miro con l' elmetto e il brando  
 'Traccia di Donna in Lei ricerco invan.  
 Gli atti, gli affetti, e l' ira quando a quando  
 Sembran di lui che diè briga a Vulcan,  
 Ed il sospetto mio anco avvalora  
 Ogni Donna che d' essa s' innamora.

Poi come ascolto quel divin suo canto  
 Nelli giudicii miei più mi confondo :  
 Che di sue note il suon levasi tanto  
 Quanto scende gravissimo al profondo.  
 Ma Donna al vago viso, agli occhi, a quanto  
 Sua bella vista altrui può far giocondo  
 Pur sembra : e io dico, se il pensier non erra,  
 Ch' è un Angelo dal ciel disceso in terra.

GIROLAMO ZAPPI.

## SONNET.

*Inscribed to Madame Malibran at Sinagaglia, in  
1834, by E. A. P.*

Donna, se tu nol sai, la terra è questa  
Fortunata natal, d' altra Sirena,\*  
Onde la fama, sull' adriaca Sena  
Ornamento e splendor, cotanto appresta.

Se non che, mentre l' onda il Tebro arresta,  
E l' Europa, di gioja è tutta piena,  
Sol la patria non bevve a simil vena  
Il cantar portentoso ; e ne fu mesta.

Or s' allegri però, Sena superba:  
Ebbe in Te, chi ristora, ogni onta e danno  
Ingrato, e d' altra figlia, imagin serba ;

Chè se del nascer tuo, fors' è giocondo  
Altro terren, pel raro asceso scanno  
A Te, patria si feo, l' immenso mondo.

\* L'Angelica Catalani.

## FAREWELL,

*Addressed to Madame Malibran by the Inhabitants  
of Lucca, on her departure from that city in 1834.*

Figlia del Ciel benefica  
 Col chiaro raggio in fronte,  
 Onde natura allegrasi  
 Allor che indori il monte,  
 Allor che ti salutano  
 I musici canori  
 Sui mattutini albori,  
 Quanto sei cara a me !

Ah non sarai di gioja  
 Cagione lusinghiera !  
 Quando dovrai dividerci,  
 D' acerbo duol foriera,  
 Da Lei che ci mostrarono  
 I Numi in mortal velo,  
 Da lei ch' è nata al Cielo  
 E che perdiam con Te.

Tu sorgerai, ma splendere  
Non ti dovranno in volto  
Il bel sereno, e il gaudio,  
Che avrai di nubi avvolto ;  
E noi disciolti in lacrime  
Ti seguirem col canto,  
Che il nostro plettro intanto  
Ripeterà così :

Parti, ma qui ne restano  
Di tue virtù sublimi  
Eterne le memorie,  
Che in ogni petto imprimi,  
Parti, ma pur ti seguono  
De' cuori la speranza,  
E quel disio che avanza  
Di rivederti un dì.

Grato pensier nell' animo  
Ritornerai sovente :  
Noi ti vedremo spargere  
Dal mesto cuor gemente  
Sulla sopita vergine  
Il pianto dell' amore,  
L' affanno del dolore,  
Che morte sol troncò.

Noi ti vedrem nell' ultimo  
Di Norma orribil fato  
Placar col sacrificio  
Il Dio ver Te sdegnato  
Indi innocente vittima  
Del barbaro Africano,  
A cui involarti invano  
La tema t' insegnò.

E in queste triste immagini  
Ritornerà sul ciglio  
Qualche pietosa lacrima  
Al tuo crudel periglio :  
E l' arte inimitabile  
Dell' armonia che desti  
Coi modi tuoi celesti  
Rammenteranno in Te.

Ti pingeranno amabile  
Quanto la Dea di Gnido ;  
Teco saran le Grazie,  
Che sul tuo volto han nido ;  
Teco di Palla il Genio,  
E in Te vedremo irata  
Di Giuno invendicata  
La maestà qual è.

Ninfe del patrio Serchio,  
Che il merto coronate  
Di Serto incorruttibile  
A Lei la fronte ornate  
Voi nel sentier seguitela  
Spargendo pianto, e fiori,  
Spargendolo d' allori  
Fin dove il piè n' andrà.

Figli del sacro Apolline  
**Eco al mio canto ergete,**  
Meste le cetre dicano  
Quanto con Lei perdete,  
Ditele i nostri gemiti,  
Come si aneli anch' ora  
Quella felice aurora  
Che a noi la renderà.

Ah che la tua bell' anima  
Secondi i nos tri voti! . . .  
Serba di noi memoria  
Anche fra lidi ignoti.  
Serto maggior di gloria  
Forse ti fia concesso,  
Ma non sarà lo stesso  
Il cuor che lo donò.

Prendi l' addio dell' Esare  
Ai mesti figli suoi  
Sciogli un sorriso tenero . . .  
Volgi uno sguardo, e poi . . .  
Ma che tu pure il ciglio  
Bagni di pianto? . . . ah sono  
Paghi di sì bel dono.  
Il Ciel gli 'secondò.

R. D.

## ADIEU

*To Madame Malibran, on her departure from Lucca.*

Degli umani per conforto  
 Quando il Dio della natura  
 Più sorride a sua fattura  
**Te formava in un trasporto**  
**Ineffabile d' amor.**

Del suo spirto creatore  
 Volle in te più vaga idea  
 Dar colui che il tutto fea  
 Scaturir del nulla fuore  
 Ad un soffio animator ;

Quindi un raggio in te trasfuse  
 Del seren di Paradiso,  
 Nel tuo sguardo, nei sorriso,  
 Celestial grazia diffuse  
 spiegar lingua non può,

E dei cantici divini  
Che degli astri al cheto giro  
Van guidando nell' Empiro  
A miriadi i serafini  
Tempra e genio in te stampò ;

Indi il canto sì soäve  
Onde i sensi e l' alme bei,  
Per cui sola in terra sei  
Che ogni affetto or dolce, or grave  
Puoi ne' cuori suscitar.

Qua dell' Esare plaudente  
Sull' aprica, amena sponda,  
Sì fu sorte a noi seconda,  
Astro fulgido, ridente  
Tu venisti a scintillar ;

Ma fugace qual baleno  
Fu il diletto, fu l' incanto  
Che quel magico tuo canto  
Destò aveva in ogni seno,  
Che tutt' alme fea gioir.

Quando il dì spuntò nel cielo  
Che del giubilo supremo  
Essar dee per noi l'estremo  
Corse a ognun per l' ossa un gelo  
All' idea del tuo partir ;

Troppò grande è la dolcezza  
Onde inebrj il core e i sensi,  
Troppò il gaudio che dispensi  
Perchè l' alma al bello avvezza  
Possa il duolo raffrenar.

Come il sol che in suo viaggio  
Tutta illumina e riscalda  
Qual' è più riposta falda  
Col benefico suo raggio,  
Coll' influsso salutar,

Tal se' tu dal cielo eletta  
A beare altre contrade,  
Che ben raro in ogni etade  
E il trovar cosa perfetta  
Qual natura in te formò.

Ma se a noi contende il fato  
D' udir più sì cari accenti,  
Se coi magici portenti  
Di tua voce, a far beato  
Altro suol ti destinò,

Come in noi di te il disio  
Nutre ancor di speme un raggio  
Questo serto, e quest' omaggio  
Deh non spargere d' oblio ;  
Che al tuo merto il Serchio offrì;

E degli anni indi nel giro  
Se dal balzo porporino  
Ti sorrida un bel mattino  
Dona un palpito, un sospiro  
A chi tu beasti un dì !

C. L. M.

## LINES

*Addressed to Madame Malibran on the same occasion  
as the above.*

Noi t' ascoltammo : e l' anima  
In estasi rapita  
Credè gustare il gaudio  
Della seconda vita,  
E al suon dell' arpe eterree  
**Seder coi Numi in Ciel.**

Noi t' ascoltammo : e immemori  
Che mortal gioja ha fine  
Credemmo eterne fossero  
Le note tue divine ;  
Ma di quel sogno amabile  
Oggi si squarcia il vel.

Tornate ai mesti gemiti  
Voi cui la sorte oppresse ;  
Tregua il destin non termine  
Al vostro duol concesse,  
Più non vi è dato suggere  
Da un labbro lusinghier

Il dolce oblio benefico  
D'ogni cocente affanno,  
E d'arte inimitabile  
Colti al soave inganno,  
Al pianto altrui sol piangere  
Di duolo o di piacer.

E Tu cui tanto prodiga  
Fu dei suoi don natura,  
Per quella voce angelica  
Che dissipa ogni cura,  
Per que' sì cari palpiti  
Che desti in ogni cor,  
Donna, ricevi l'ultimo  
Serto ed il mesto addio :  
Omaggio così tenero  
Non ricuoprir d'oblio ;  
Son delle nostre lagrime  
Cospersi questi fior . . .

Ma con quei modi ingenui  
Onde ogni core invogli  
Ecco dei fior che cadono  
Or questo, or quel raccogli  
E in atto soavissimo  
L' appressi al labbro al sen ! . . .

E voi prescelti a tessere  
Il serto dell' onore  
O pegni troppo fragili  
Di un immutato amore,  
Voi perirete? ... ah serbane  
Donna una fronda almen;

Teco l' adduci tenera  
Di questo suol memoria,  
E quando nei più fulgidi  
Giorni della tua gloria

Per te l' Insubre popolo  
Corone intreccerà,  
Essa di queste lagrime  
A Te favelli allora,  
E come il soffio placido  
Di un aura che innamora,  
Cara di noi nell' anima  
L' idea ti scenderà.

## COMPLIMENTARY SONNETS

*Addressed to Madame Malibran, by various writers.*

## 1.

Sei pur cara, armonia, potente amico  
 Raggio che guidi a bellezze nascose ;  
 Per te dell' arti è lo splendor qui antico,  
 E all' antico il novel sempre rispose :

Cuo spiro l' idioma, ond' io pur dico,  
 Italico dolcissimo compose,  
 Cu a Sanzio colorivi e a Lodovico  
 L' eterne tele e le stupende cose.

O Donna, o voce, o armonioso incanto,  
 O letizia dell' alme, o meraviglia  
 Umiliato il mio carme ti canto.

Poiche t' udio e poichè tanto apprese  
 Di cielo in Ce, nè ti può dir sua figlia,  
 Oh quanta gloria manca al bel paese !

## II.

Il primo carme che di Te suonava ,  
Per le Sebezie rive, io lo temprai,  
E l' alma concitata a me il dettava,  
L' alma che tutta inebbriar tu sai.

Or di te canto, ed alla turba ignava,  
Che vinta dal rossore atterra i rai,  
**Dirò soltanto, che null' altra òsava**  
**Sognar la gloria che mercando vai.**

Uno è l' astro maggior dei firmamento,  
E fra i tanti che battono un sentiero  
Non produce ogni età che un sol portento ;

E tal Te chiama, o Donna, il mondo intero.  
Chè la possanza d' ogni tuo concento  
In estasi rapisce ogni pensiero.

## III.

Son Vate incolto : e la mia cetra umile  
Polverosa e negletta sen giacea :  
Maria mi scosse, e sol Maria potea  
Mover mio canto, e sublimar mio stile.

S' arretri, e frema, e sperdasi ogni vile  
Ch' osa toccar tua fama !—Tu sei Dea  
Non sei mortale ; ed al tuo dir si bea  
Anche il più rozzo cor . . . Non hai simile !

Euterpe sola al paragon ti stia  
In modular la voce, e nell' Agone  
Abbia invidia Melpomene e Talia.

In terra a consolar l' alme scendesti,  
E poi carca di palme e di corone,  
Ritornerai nel Ciel ove nascesti.

In Segno di Vera Stima,  
G. BATTISTA GOTTARDI,  
*Artista Drammatico.*

## IV.

Allor che sciogli ad ispirato canto  
Tua bella voce, e tuoi soavi accenti,  
Arte è unita a Natura, e i tuoi portenti  
Immergon l'alme in delizioso incanto.

Sia che tu pinga amore all' ire accanto,  
Sia che la gioja, e 'l riso, de' viventi  
I sensi inebri sì che in que' momenti  
Esprimon teco amore e riso e pianto.

O giovin donna, a tal giungesti ormai,  
Che nel mondo non v' ha per te rivale :  
Forse in cielo fra gli angoli ne avrai.

Ognun qui esclama, cui stupore assale  
Quando di tua virtù beato il rendi :  
Tanto merto non puote esser mortale.

THE END.



